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Nick Carter Stories

THE SEVERED HAND
or- Nick Carter and the Shadow of Death~

NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE SEVERED HAND;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A GRUESOME DISCOVERY.

"Great Scott! what a find! No wonder the poor woman fainted. Break away from that book for half a minute, Nick, and listen to this."

The speaker was Chick Carter, the famous New York detective's chief assistant, and both then were seated in the library in Nick's Madison Avenue residence. It was early one evening in October.

It was the hour for after-dinner cigars and a brief respite from arduous professional duties. Chick was absorbed in the news columns of the latest edition of the *Universe*, while Nick was perusing a recent scientific publication, Criminal Therapeutics, by a noted German surgeon and criminologist. He laid aside the volume when Chick spoke, remarking inquiringly:

"You have struck something of interest?"

"Judge for yourself, Nick."

"One moment. That is Patsy's step in the hall. He may wish to hear it."

Nick's junior assistant, Patsy Garvan, entered while the detective was speaking, and Nick added, a bit dryly:

"Chick has found something startling in a newspaper."

Gee! is that possible?" said Patsy, grinning.

"He is going to read it to us."

"Good! Witchy music, leader! Cut loose, Chick; I'm all ears, like a jack rabbit."

Chick Carter ignored these jocose observations. He reverted to the newspaper and read aloud the following strange story, which appeared under sensational headlines:

"It is an open question, one that is being frequently asked in the immediate locality of the gruesome discovery, whether or not a dismembered human body is hidden somewhere in the wooded section a short distance from Yonkers. The question has arisen in consequence of a story told to the local police by one Theresa Turk, an Armenian pack peddler, who was walking to this city late yesterday afternoon.

"While passing a narrow woodland road known as Shaw's lane, which diverges from the main highway in a somewhat lonely locality, the woman caught sight of something glittering among the dead leaves and twigs near the side of the lane. Hoping she had found something of value, she dropped her pack and hastened to remove the leaves and loose dirt partly covering the object.

"It proved to be—a severed human hand.

"The hand had been cut off close to the wrist, and the rigid fingers were tightly clenched around the handle of an open dirk knife, the gleaming blade of which, protruding slightly from the dead leaves, had caught the woman's eye.

"Theresa Turk fell in a faint, horrified by the gruesome discovery, and she was found in that condition by the occupants of a passing touring car, bound for Yonkers. Both the woman and the severed hand were taken into the car, and the dismembered organ was turned over to the local police, who now have it in charge.

"The severed hand is undoubtedly that of a man. It is partly decomposed, and somewhat swollen, presumably due to exposure. It is the opinion of Doctor Gaston, of Yonkers, who has examined it, that about eight days have passed since it was cut off, and that it was done with a single blow, with an ax, hatchet, or cleaver.

"There is no indication that a ring has ever been worn on either finger, which otherwise might have established the identity of the victim. Nor does the dirk knife rigidly clenched in the hand bear any mark pointing to the owner. The fact that it is the left hand, however, denoting that the victim may have been left-handed, since it appears reasonable to suppose that he was using the weapon for self-defense, may enable the authorities to identify him.

"The police have visited the spot where the severed hand was found, but could discover nothing that shed any light on the mystery. No footprints, no trace of blood, nor any signs of a struggle could be found. If any existed, they must have been obliterated by the recent rain.

"Inquiries by the police, and the publication of the facts in the local newspapers of yesterday, have evoked no information that might have a bearing upon the case. It bids fair, at present, to remain an unsolved mystery."

Chick dropped the newspaper upon his knees and gazed at his two hearers.

"That's all," said he. "How does it hit you?"

"That is quite enough, Chick, I should say," replied Nick.

"Gee whiz! There must have been something doing," said Patsy.

"Something doing, Patsy, is right."

"What is your opinion, chief?"

"Assuming that all of the statements in that story are correct, we can very quickly deduce several undeniable conclusions," Nick observed. "They may have been overlooked by the police, perhaps, but Doctor Gaston should not have lost sight of them. Many physicians, however, do not seek under the surface for positive evidence of crime. They see only the physiological aspect of a case, not any of the subtle points established by the analysis of the detective and criminologist. Let's see what we can deduce from the facts stated."

"Go ahead, chief," said Patsy.

"To begin with," Nick proceeded, "the dirk knife was rigidly clenched in the severed hand. That is very significant. A human hand after being cut off could not possibly be closed around the handle of a knife and made to remain rigidly grasping it. Nor could the hand of a corpse be closed in that way, and then cut off. Such a condition is possible only when a hand, forcibly clutching a knife, is so quickly and keenly cut off that the muscles do not relax sufficiently to drop the knife, but maintain the hold until rigor mortis sets in, and makes the clutch a rigid and permanent one."

"That is true, Nick," Chick readily agreed.

"Obviously, then, we have eliminated several possibilities which at first sight might appear tenable."

"Namely?"

"The affair is not a hoax, the planting of a hand with a knife in it by medical students, for instance, with a view to creating a sensational mystery, having no legitimate basis."

"No, not that surely."

"Nor could it have been done by any other person. The hand was, and must have been, cut from a living man who, when dismembered, was grasping the knife in the manner described."

"That's right, too," declared Patsy. "There's no getting around it."

"Let's go a step farther, then," Nick continued. "The dismemberment was not the result of an accident, or it would have found its way into the newspapers, or surely have been reported since the finding of the hand and the publication of the circumstances. Furthermore, the hand was hurriedly buried under some dead leaves, and was discovered only by chance. Plainly enough, then, a deliberate attempt has been made to conceal the circumstances."

"Surely," said Chick. "That is equally true."

"It is safe to assume, then, that the man was using the dirk knife for self-defense, and that he was the victim of a murderous assault. Obviously, too, one of his assailants, if there was more than one, had a weapon with which he was able to lop off the hand with a single blow. It may, as Doctor Gaston says, have been an ax, a hatchet, or a cleaver."

"Quite likely."

"Here is another point," said Nick. "Such a serious injury requires the immediate attention of a surgeon. The man would have bled to death unless the hemorrhage was quickly stopped. Fatal results would ensue, moreover, unless the wound was properly treated. Only a physician could have done the work properly.

"Here's the point, then," continued the detective. "No physician in that locality has been called upon, nor was the victim taken to any hospital, or the case would have been reported to the police by this time. It's a hundred to one, therefore, that one of his assailants was a physician who was capable of properly handling such a case."

"By Jove, that's a fine point," Chick thoughtfully replied. "On the other hand, however, the victim may have died without surgical attention. He may have lost his hand while defending himself from a gang that had conspired to kill him."

"I don't think so."

"Why?"

"How many murder cases can you recall, Chick, in which, unless the entire dismembered body was found, the victim lost one of his hands?"

"None, Nick, I confess."

"I don't believe that this is a single exception to the rule," said Nick. "Furthermore, conspirators bent upon killing a man would have accomplished it without giving him a chance to defend himself with a dirk knife."

"It does seem so, Nick, I'll admit."

"In my opinion, Chick, there is much more to this case than appears on the surface," Nick added. "Murderers would not have left the hand and knife merely covered with a few dead leaves. They would have buried it too deep for chance discovery. The fact that they did not, indicates that they departed in great haste, possibly in order to properly attend to the injured man."

"That's another fine point, Nick. You may be right."

"Sooner or later, unless I am much mistaken, we shall hear more about the case."

"The victim's identity may be discovered," Chick observed.

"Possibly."

"Be that as it may, Nick, some poor devil has lost a hand."

"Gee! I know one man, chief, to whom the loss of both hands would be a benefit to the community," said Patsy.

"Who is that?"

"Ambrose Floyd, the forger."

"There is some truth in that, Patsy," said Nick. "He would in that case commit no more of his clever forgeries. It would not be enough to lop off one hand, however, for he writes equally well with both."

"That's why I included both," said Patsy.

"Have you received any additional information concerning his second escape from prison?" Chick inquired. "It is nearly two months since he fooled the hospital guards and gave them the slip."

"I have heard only that he was supposed to be very

sick in the prison hospital, and that he forged the warden's name to written orders calling the two guards in charge of his ward to the warden's office. While they were absent, and in spite of the presence of the prison physician, Floyd contrived to make his escape. It is suspected that the physician was bribed to aid him, but there is no pohitive evidence of it. Be that as it may, the crafty rascal succeeded in turning the trick. He is a slippery scamp, this same Ambrose Floyd."

"It is the second time that he has tricked the prison deputies by means of a clever forgery," said Chick. "They will learn sooner or later to distrust any writing in which he figures."

"Gee! they may never get another chance," put in Patsy. "It's only fourteen months since we nailed him for that bond-forgery and bank-robbery case. He served less than a year, and has been out nearly seven weeks. That's time enough for a crook of his caliber to have pulled off some slick job for raising the coin with which to cover his tracks. It's dollars to fried holes that we shall never land him again."

"Don't bank on that too heavily, Patsy," said Nick. "Remember the moth and the flame. Like many other crooks, Floyd is passionately fond of New York, and he may venture here even at the risk of getting his wings singed. Time will tell."

"What do you say, Nick?" Chick inquired, glancing again at the newspaper.

"Say about what?"

"Suppose I telephone to the Yonkers police and inquire about this severed hand. They may have learned something definite about it."

"I have no objection," said Nick.

"It certainly is a curious mystery."

"So curious, Chick, that I somehow have a hunch that we shall be rung into it."

"As a last resort, eh?"

"Well, possibly."

"I'll ring up the Yonkers chief and see what more he has learned."

Chick at once proceeded to do so, but only negative information was received.

Nothing more had been learned about the severed hand.

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING LAWYER.

Nick Carter never had a hunch, as he termed it, that did not materialize. Intuitive in a remarkable degree, his subtle impressions were like shadows cast before, and they were invariably reliable.

Nick's hunch in regard to the case of the severed hand, presenting a mystery which he foresaw would baffle the regular police, began to take definite shape as early as nine o'clock the following morning.

The ball was set rolling by a telephone call which Nick personally answered. He talked so long over the wire, that Chick and Patsy, then busy with the morning mail, were expecting important news when he hung up the receiver.

"It was Mrs. Caleb Scott, of Yonkers," he said gravely. "She is very anxious about her husband. He went away ten days ago, sending her a letter, stating that legal business would require him in Washington for a time, and he has not since been heard from. She has communicated with intimate friends in Washington, whom he invariably visits, but they have not seen him. I am going to Yonkers to see what I can learn. Ring for Danny and the touring car, Patsy, and then get your hat and coat. I may need you."

There was one good reason, at least, for Nick Carter's immediate interest in the case. The Honorable Caleb Scott was one of the leading lawyers in New York State, and one of Nick's intimate and most valued friends, a fact that had led the latter's wife to call on the great detective for advice and assistance. In addition to this, Nick had recalled the mystery of the severed hand, and he felt forebodings that precluded procrastination.

"By Jove, it may be that he was the man who lost a hand," said Chick, detecting the thought in Nick's mind. "The time is about the same, according to Doctor Gaston."

"I have thought of that," said Nick, while he prepared for his departure.

"Did you mention it to his wife?"

"No. She did not speak of it, which convinces me that she either has not heard of the gruesome discovery, or thinks that it's utterly improbable that it can be her husband's hand. I do not wish to add to her anxiety while there is any room for doubt."

"Certainly not."

"I'll find a way to make sure."

"But who can have had it in for Caleb Scott?" said Chick. "He is the cleanest man in New York State. He is not a criminal lawyer, moreover, who might have incurred the enmity of crooks, or have a case against a gang who might down a criminal lawyer for self-protection. Scott handles only civil cases, aside from guardian and trust accounts, that run into the millions."

"All that is very true, Chick, but the circumstances are not encouraging," Nick replied, drawing on his gloves. "I must look into this as quickly as possible. Caleb Scott would turn heaven and earth to do me a service. I must do no less for him."

"I agree with you, Nick."

"Here's Danny with the car, chief," cried Patsy, from the adjoining hall.

"I'll phone you, Chick, if there should be any occasion," Nick added, as he hurried out to the waiting car.

It was ten o'clock when he arrived in Yonkers, where the Scott residence was one of the most attractive in the city. Before going there, however, Nick called briefly at police headquarters, where he viewed the severed hand and talked with the chief.

The latter corroborated the story read by Chick the previous evening. He also added that, in spite of exhaustive investigations, no further discoveries had been made. The dismembered hand then was much decomposed, and the open knife which had been removed from it served in no way to suggest the unfortunate victim's identity.

Nick said nothing to the chief about the mysterious absence of Lawyer Scott, of his own misgivings, or the occasion for his presence in Yonkers. He returned with Patsy to the touring car, and they proceeded to the Scott residence.

"You may wait here with Danny," said Nick, glancing at Patsy when they arrived at the driveway gate. "We'll not run up to the house. I'll sing out if I need you."

"All right, chief," said Patsy.

Nick hastened up a long gravel walk leading to the front door of the house. Before he could ring it was opened by a handsome, dignified woman of fifty, while a pretty girl in the twenties stood near by in the finely furnished hall. They were the wife and daughter of the missing man, and both looked pale and anxious.

Nick was very well acquainted with both, as appeared in his familiar greeting.

"Good morning, Mrs. Scott. Hello, Marion," said he, pressing their extended hands. "I'm more than sorry to know that Mr. Scott is mysteriously missing. You must not, however, apprehend anything serious. Hundreds of men disappear temporarily under unavoidable circumstances, only to return all right, and with perfectly natural explanations. Quell your anxiety, therefore, and look on the bright side. I will leave no stone unturned to find my old friend."

"That is like you, Mr. Carter," replied Mrs. Scott gratefully. "Your mere presence is an encouragement."

"It is, indeed, Mr. Carter," supplemented Marion. "I know we can depend upon you."

"Surely. I came here as quickly as possible."

"We are, of course, dreadfully anxious," added Mrs. Scott. "Caleb never remains away without writing me frequently. Nor did he ever leave home for a week without having mentioned his intention and the occasion for his absence. I am sure there is something wrong, Mr. Carter."

"Let's lose no time, then, in attacking the mystery," said Nick. "I feel very sure that we shall solve it and bring Mr. Scott home right side up."

"Come into the library."

"To begin with, let me ask you a few questions," said Nick, while he accompanied them into the finely furnished room.

"As many as you wish."

"Just how long has Mr. Scott been absent?"

"Ten days. He went to his New York office in the morning, and I received a letter from him in the afternoon, stating that——"

"You still have the letter?" Nick interposed.

"Certainly."

"I will presently examine it. He had said nothing about going to Washington?"

"Not a word. He took no extra clothing when leaving home, moreover, so that I know he then had no intention of going away," said Mrs. Scott confidently.

"Probably not," Nick allowed. "Has he recently had any unusual visitors at the house?"

"No, none."

"Or expressed any apprehensions, or appeared reticent, or worried?"

"Nothing of the kind, Mr. Carter."

"Have any suspicious persons been seen near the house?"

"I know of none," said Mrs. Scott.

"You know, perhaps, something about his law business," said Nick. "Do you know whether he has recently been retained in any criminal case?"

"I feel safe in saying that he has not, or he would have mentioned it to me. He talks freely with me about his business."

"So far, then, so good," said Nick. "Now, Mrs. Scott, let me see the letter he wrote you."

Marion hastened to take it from a drawer in the library table and placed it in the detective's hand. Nick read it, carefully noting that it was written with a pen, and on the letter paper of a leading New York hotel. The envelope also bore the same printed form.

"Evidently," said he, gazing at Mrs. Scott, "this letter was not written in his law office. He must, assuming him to have been the writer, have gone to this hotel for some purpose. Is the hand perfectly familiar?"

"Yes—but not the phraseology," she replied.

"Explain."

"I refer to the address—My dear wife."

"Is that unusual?"

"I never knew Caleb to use that form. My name is Mary, and he invariably has begun his letters—My dear Mollie, which he always calls me."

"I see."

"The letter also closes with—Your loving husband, Caleb Scott. I don't think he ever closed a letter to me in that way. He always signs them—Your devoted Caleb. I can show you a dozen, at least, all signed in that way."

"That has some significance," Nick admitted.

"It convinces me, Mr. Carter, that he did not write that letter."

"Yet you say you recognize the hand."

"I say only that it is a facsimile of his writing. I believe, nevertheless, that it is a skillful forgery."

"Let me see a recent specimen of writing known to have been his," said Nick.

Mrs. Scott brought several documents from a roll-top desk in an alcove of the spacious room.

Nick compared the two writings. He was an expert chirographist. He could not, however, detect the slightest difference in the style, stroke, or little peculiarities which individualize every person's penmanship.

"If a forgery, Mrs. Scott, it is a remarkably clever one," said he, after a moment. "I know only one man who could so perfectly imitate another's writing. He is extraordinarily gifted in that respect. His name is Ambrose Floyd."

"I never heard of him," Mrs. Scott replied, shaking her head.

"He escaped from prison about two months ago."

"But what motive could he, or any one else have had——"

"It is useless to speculate upon the motive in this case, Mrs. Scott, until we find evidence hinting at it, at least," Nick interposed. Then he carelessly added: "This appears to have been written with the left hand."

"Impossible, if written by Caleb," Mrs. Scott said quickly. "He is not left-handed."

This was what Nick had aimed to learn, and a furtive glance at Marion convinced him that neither woman had read about the severed hand, also that they had given no publicity to the lawyer's mysterious absence. He made sure of the latter by asking:

"Whom have you told about this matter, Mrs. Scott?"

"Only you, Mr. Carter," she replied. "I have refrained from creating any sensation over it, lest it should prove to have been needless."

"Right," said Nick approvingly. "Have you a pair of kid gloves belonging to Mr. Scott?"

"Yes. There is a pair in the pocket of his light overcoat in the hall."

"I wish to borrow them for a time."

"Get them, Marion, please."

The girl hastened to do so, and Nick put them in his pocket when she handed them to him.

"I may find them of use in my investigations," he explained, observing Mrs. Scott's inquiring gaze. "I see that the handle of the safe door is turned. Did Mr. Scott leave the safe unlocked when he departed?"

It was a large steel safe set in the wall of the alcove, where the lawyer was in the habit of frequently working at home.

"No, he did not. I know the combination, however, and I have opened the safe several times during his absence, in order to search for something that might explain the mystery."

"I infer that you have found nothing."

"Absolutely nothing."

"Have you searched his desk?"

"Every nook and corner of it."

"I may wish to do so a little later," said Nick. "It is quite possible that I should detect something that would escape your notice. You will have no objection?"

"Quite the contrary, Mr. Carter."

"Has he a law office in Yonkers?"

"Yes, also one in New York."

"Whom does he employ?"

"Only a woman stenographer in each, both of whom have been in his employ for several years, and who are familiar with the details of his business."

"Have you communicated with them?"

"Certainly. Neither of them can explain his absence. He had said nothing to either of them about going to Washington, nor do they know of any business calling him there."

"I will talk with them, perhaps, unless I succeed in learning——"

Nick was interrupted by the ringing of a telephone on the lawyer's desk.

"Answer it, Marion—hasten!" cried Mrs. Scott. "It may be Caleb himself, or information concerning him."

Nick Carter waited while Marion answered the telephone call. She turned after a few moments, saying, with a look of mingled disappointment and sympathy:

"It was Stella Nostrand. She says that her father is steadily failing. They have no hope of his recovery."

"She refers to Randolph Nostrand, one of my husband's most intimate friends," Mrs. Scott explained to the detective. "He was taken strangely ill a short time ago. Stella, his only child, is Marion's dearest friend."

"Strangely ill?" questioned Nick tentatively.

"So I am told. Doctor Gleason, their family physician, is mystified by the case. The same is true of a specialist whom he has called. It is said to be a form of paralysis."

Nick did not prolong his interview. He arose quite abruptly, saying:

"I am going to leave you for a time. I shall probably return about one o'clock, possibly not until two, when I may wish to examine the contents of the desk and safe."

"Make it in time to lunch with us," Mrs. Scott invited.

"Thank you, but I prefer not to make that engagement," Nick replied. "My movements are uncertain, and I may be busy just at your lunch hour. I shall return early in the afternoon, however. In the meantime, leave this matter entirely to me. I shall at once begin a vigorous investigation."

"How can we repay you, Mr. Carter?"

"By being patient and courageous while I ferret out the truth," said Nick earnestly. "I hope very soon to discover something definite."

"God grant it!" Mrs. Scott said fervently. "This suspense is terrible."

Nick lingered only to add a few encouraging words, then hastened out to rejoin Patsy.

"To police headquarters again, Danny," he directed quickly. "Let her go lively."

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER'S THEORY.

"It looks bad, Patsy. I do not know where and how we can pick up the trail; but it must be done, for all that, and done as quickly as possible."

Nick Carter's declarations were in reply to a question from Patsy, asked while they were speeding away from the Scott residence.

"Do you think he has been murdered, chief?"

"Abducted, at least. It is possible, of course, that his abductors have killed him."

"Couldn't you find any clew?"

"I have not yet searched for one, though Mrs. Scott has vainly done so," said Nick. "I first wish to make sure whether the hand at the police station is Scott's."

"Can you do it?"

"I think so," said Nick. "I will tell you all his wife could state about the case."

He did so briefly, and he had just concluded when Danny slowed down at the police station.

"Wait for me," Nick directed. "I'll return in a few moments."

He found Captain Daley, chief of the Yonkers police, alone in his private office.

"Hello! Back again, Nick," was his greeting.

"Yes. I wish to see that severed hand once more," Nick replied. "I then may want you to go with me to the spot where it was found. Can you spare the time?"

"Certainly, Nick, and glad to accommodate you," said the chief, gazing at him inquiringly. "Have you found a clew?"

"I can presently tell you," said Nick. "Let's see the hand."

Captain Daley brought from an adjoining room a box in which it had been placed, then removed it and laid it on a table.

Nick had in the meantime taken from his pocket the left-hand glove belonging to the missing lawyer. He compared it carefully with the hand, noting the size, the length of the fingers, and the creases in them when the fingers were bent.

Watching him, Captain Daley saw plainly that a clew had, indeed, been found by the detective.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "Whose glove is that, Nick?"

"Have you any doubt that it has frequently been worn on this severed hand?" Nick inquired, returning the glove to his pocket.

"Not the slightest doubt."

"Nor have I, Daley," Nick said gravely. "I now am going to confide in you, for I may need your assistance, but you must not make any disclosures without my permission, nor communicate with the victim's family. I don't want them alarmed, nor the news spread."

"I'll not open my mouth, Nick, depend upon it."

"Very good. This glove belongs to Caleb Scott, the lawyer."

"Great Cæsar's ghost!" Captain Daley exclaimed. "You don't mean——"

"I mean that Scott has been mysteriously missing for ten days," Nick interrupted. "I will tell you more while we are on our way to the place where this hand was found. My touring car is outside."

"I'm ready."

"Come on, then."

Captain Daley sprang the lock of his office door, then followed Nick to the car, entering the tonneau with him, while Patsy hastened to take a place on the front seat.

It took Nick only a very few minutes to state the case to Chief Daley and to repeat his former instructions, while the chief again assured him that he would in no way interfere. They had arrived in a fashionable outskirt of the city in the meantime, and were passing an extensive estate overlooking the Hudson, the many attractive features of which caught the detective's eye, and caused him briefly to turn the conversation.

"Who owns that place, Daley?" he inquired.

"Randolph Nostrand."

"H'm, is that so? The man taken suddenly ill and not expected to live," thought Nick.

He viewed with augmented interest the extensive estate, its walls and hedges and beautiful grounds, the fine colonial dwellings, half hidden amid the trees of a surrounding park, the outlying stable and garage, and a rustic pavilion, in one corner of the estate, which overlooked the placid river. The only person visible, however, was a gardener at work near the great grille gate.

"Who is this Nostrand?" asked Nick.

"Retired importer," said Chief Daley tersely. "He has not been in business for more than twenty years."

"Wealthy?"

"Something like a million. That will not save him, however, if what I hear is true. He is said to be on his deathbed."

"An elderly man?"

"Seventy, or thereabouts. He married quite late in life, and his wife died a dozen years ago. There is only one child, Stella Nostrand, to inherit the estate. She is about twenty, and one of the local smart set. Fine girl, too, and as pretty as a picture. She is hand and glove with Scott's daughter, Marion, and they have the pole for style and beauty in these parts."

"Has Nostrand been active locally in any way?"

"Only one," said Chief Daley, smiling a bit oddly.

"How so?"

"He has been mighty active in opposing his daughter's affection for a likely chap here in town," the chief explained. "That will continue to keep him busy, all right, if he recovers. For Stella has a pronounced streak of the old man in her. She can be as willful as he, when so inclined, and I reckon her inclination is strong enough in this case. She's over head and ears in love with young Parker. I get all this from my own daughters, who are among their friends."

"Who is Parker? What about him?"

"His name is Horace Parker. He is studying law in Dexter's office, a local attorney. He is only twenty-two, but as clean-cut and promising a chap as ever stood in leather."

"Why is Nostrand so opposed to him?"

"Lack of the long green, Nick, and family dishonor. Parker's father is doing time for passing forged notes. He was caught in a net with Ambrose Floyd long ago, and was sent up for eighteen years."

"Ambrose Floyd, eh?"

"The same. You know him, Nick, all right," said Daley, with a laugh. "Parker senior was convicted out in Illinois, where he is serving his sentence, and Nostrand cannot stand for a son-in-law whose father is a convict."

"The daughter, it seems, can overlook it," Nick observed.

"Sure thing. She don't believe in visiting the sins of the father upon the head of the son. She's dead right, too, in my opinion—but one cannot turn Nostrand with a yoke of steers. He's as determined and arbitrary as a crazy Turk."

"That makes a bad mess of it."

"Decidedly. The girl had better watch out and play her cards with caution, or the old man will disinherit her—if he lasts long enough to turn such a scurvy trick. He is quite capable of it, if she defies him. Take that road, chauffeur."

The last was addressed to Danny, as the speeding car approached a rural road diverging to the left. Nick did not resume the conversation, and Captain Daley presently added:

"Stop fifty yards ahead, where the lane makes off to the right. That's Shaw's lane. It was there that the lopped-off hand was found."

Danny brought the car to a stop a moment later, and Nick sprang out and began an inspection of the scene, followed by the chief and Patsy. It was a lonely locality, with not a house in sight, and a highway shut in by a belt of woods, through which the lane wound its way to some remote dwelling.

"Here is where it was lying," Daley added, approaching a large oak tree overhanging the entrance to the lane. "It was partly covered with dead and decaying leaves. Two of my men have been out here and looked over the ground, but they could not find any other evidence."

"They made one mistake," said Nick dryly.

"Mistake?"

"In looking only over the ground?"

"What do you mean?"

"They should have looked above the ground," said Nick, who had approached the oak tree mentioned. "Obviously, Daley, a man's hand could not have been cut off clean with a single blow, unless his arm or wrist was lying upon or against something solid. Look here."

Nick pointed to the trunk of the tree, more than six feet above the ground. A long cut in the rough bark was quite plainly discernible. It extended at a slight angle across the tree, and Nick at once began to pick off pieces of the rough bark directly under it. On several of them he found traces of dry blood, drops that evidently had trickled in back of the bark, which had prevented effacing by recent rain.

"Great guns!" Chief Daley exclaimed, staring. "You have the eyes of a lynx, Nick. That's blood as sure as I'm a foot high. What do you make of all this?"

Nick examined the base of the trunk before replying. Rising after a moment, he said gravely:

"It is not very obscure, Daley. There was a struggle here between Caleb Scott and two or more assailants. It is impossible to determine just how many, or to trace

them, for time and rain have obliterated their footprints."

"But how do you know there was a struggle?" Daley demanded.

"Because Scott had his back against this tree, presumably to prevent an attack from behind. Here are marks left by his heel in the bark at the base of the trunk."

"By Jove, that's true, Nick."

"Plainly enough, then, there was a fight in which Scott was opposed by two or more assailants. He in some way secured a dirk knife. The fact that he held it in his left hand, though not naturally left-handed, leads me to think that he may have seized it from the hand, or belt, of one of his assailants."

"That might be, of course."

"Notice, now, the height of this cut in the bark. It is nearly seven feet from the ground."

"Well, what of that?"

"Scott evidently had raised his hand to stab one of his assailants. This brought his arm and wrist higher than his head, and up against the tree. Before he could deliver the blow, however, one of the ruffians struck his uplifted wrist with some sharp weapon. It cut clean through the wrist and into the bark. The length of the cut shows that it could not have been a hatchet. It may have been an ax, a cleaver, or possibly a sword, or a very heavy knife. What it was is not very material. Take my word for it, however, that is the way it was done."

"Who could deny it in the face of such evidence?" replied Daley. "There is no getting around it. You certainly have sized up this part of the job correctly, Nick, but how on earth was Caleb Scott caught in this lonely spot by a gang of ruffians? What was he doing here?"

"I cannot answer those questions until later."

"You mean that you're going to answer them?"

"You bet I'm going to answer them," Nick bluntly declared. "I'll not rest nights until they are answered. There is no more to learn here, however. I merely wanted to clinch the theory I had formed. I now know where I stand. We'll now jump back to Yonkers, Patsy, and to the Scott residence. I want to examine the contents of that desk and safe. In the meantime, Chief Daley, mum's the word."

"Trust me, Nick," Daley again assured him. "I'm dumb as an oyster."

CHAPTER IV.

THE APPLE OF DISCORD.

Nick Carter hardly spoke during the run into Yonkers. He was deep in thought. He knew beyond any reasonable doubt that he had sized up the case correctly, as far as he had gone; that Caleb Scott had been abducted, lured from New York on the day of the crime, taken to the spot where the assault had occurred; and that he very possibly had since been killed by his abductors.

Nick felt sure he was right up to that point, but there he found himself facing a blank brick wall. The identity of the criminals, the motive for the crime, the means employed, the method adopted to blind the lawyer and lure him to his fate—on these points Nick was all in the dark.

"I have decided upon two steps, Patsy," said he, after dropping Captain Daley at the police station: "Scott has been abducted, possibly killed. The fact that the crime was committed in this locality leads me to suspect that the criminals reside in these parts. Naturally, of course, they secured him as near as possible to where they intended taking him, thus eliminating the risk of conveying him a needlessly long distance."

"That's reasonable, chief," said Patsy.

"Naturally, too, knowing that investigations will follow sooner or later, they may be stealthily watching his residence at times, with a view to learning what is being done and who is doing it."

"That's right, too."

"A spy thus engaged, however, would be exceedingly wary," said Nick. "He could only be discovered with cunning surpassing his own. After leaving me at the Scott residence, therefore, you must depart with Danny and head for New York, precisely as if your work on the case was ended. Ride only a mile from town, however, and then return in disguise, and——"

"Watch out for the spy," put in Patsy."

"Exactly."

"I'm on, chief. I've got you."

"You may return home with the car, Danny. It might expose the subterfuge, if kept here," Nick further directed. "Also tell Chick that I will telephone to him at nine o'clock this evening."

"From the Scott residence, Mr. Carter?"

"Probably. I noticed this morning that both the safe and desk were filled with letters, documents, and papers of one kind or another. It will take several hours to examine them. I have a hunch that I shall find among them the motive for this crime. I shall go through them from A to Z, therefore, if necessary."

"I'll tell him, Mr. Carter," said Danny.

"Also tell him what we have learned about the case. That will save me from phoning the particulars."

"I'll do so, sir."

"That's all then, at present," said Nick. "I shall hear a signal whistle, Patsy, if you should need me."

"I'm on, chief," Patsy repeated.

They had turned the corner which brought them to the driveway gate of the Scott residence, and Nick sprang from the touring car and strode up the walk leading to the house. He was seen from the library window by Marion, who hastened to admit him.

"Any news, Mr. Carter?" was her first question.

"Not yet," said Nick, smiling gravely. "But do not be disappointed. I did not expect to solve the mystery as soon as this. Be assured, however, that I will finally solve it."

"I hope so," said Marion fervently. "You are just in time to meet Stella Nostrand's friend, Horace Parker, of whom we were speaking this morning."

"Ah, is that so?"

"He calls here frequently. I don't mind confessing to you, Mr. Carter, that I act as a sort of go-between for them," Marion added, blushing. "Mr. Nostrand is so bitterly opposed to him, and so harsh and arbitrary in his treatment of Stella, that he has forbidden him even to enter his grounds, much less his house."

"I see," said Nick.

"But Stella has a mind of her own, and is equally determined," said Marion. "I don't think you will blame her, either, after meeting Mr. Parker. Old Mr. Nostrand is absurdly unreasonable."

She conducted Nick to the library while speaking, where Mrs. Scott and the young man were seated. An introduc-

tion followed, Parker eagerly rising to accept the detective's hand; and Nick was fain to admit that he had never seen a more prepossessing type of true American manhood.

For Parker was a splendidly built, athletic man in the twenties, with strong, clean-cut features, a frank and strikingly attractive face, and natural ease and ingenuousness that were irresistibly winning.

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Carter, and to know that you are looking into this matter," he said earnestly, after their greeting. "You soon will ferret out the truth, I am sure."

"I expect to do so," said Nick.

"I heard Marion, bless her heart, tell you our little secret, so I feel that all is open and aboveboard between us, just as it should be. You also know about my father, Mrs. Scott has informed me, and why Mr. Nostrand has blacklisted me. It seems very unjust, but there is no turning him, Mr. Carter, no turning Randolph Nostrand from anything upon which his mind is set."

'So I understand," said Nick.

"I am glad for another reason that you are interested in this case," Parker added. "I saw a man this morning on whom you would like to lay hands. I certainly would, sir, if I were to act upon my personal feelings."

"What man, Mr. Parker?"

"The scoundrel who led father to the bad, and——"

"Not Ambrose Floyd?" questioned Nick, interrupting.

"Yes, sir."

"You saw him this morning?"

"I certainly did," Parker forcibly asserted. I could not mistake his face. It is fixed indelibly in my mind, and though I had only a glance at him this morning, I can take an oath that I was not mistaken."

"Where did you see him?"

"From my office window. He was in an automobile with two other man, both strangers to me. The car was moving rapidly, but I saw Floyd distinctly for a moment, though he did not see me. I rushed down to the street, hoping to identify the car, or get its number, but it had turned a corner and disappeared."

"How long ago, Mr. Parker?"

"Less than an hour."

"Have you reported it to the police?"

"I have not. Marion had telephoned to me that you were to be here about this time, so I decided to wait and inform you."

"I'm glad you did," said Nick. "The police might publish the fact that the rascal was seen and recognized, which would immediately put him on his guard. Did you get a look at his two companions?"

"Only a glance," said Parker, shaking his head. "I could not identify them, though I noticed that each wore a full beard, and that the man driving the car was very dark. They appeared to be men in middle life."

"Full beards, eh? Appearances, then, may not be reliable," said Nick. "Both men may have been in disguise. I am glad you told me this. It looks very much as if Floyd is engaged in some kind of a knavish job in these parts. Say nothing about this to others, Parker, pending my investigations."

"Trust me, Mr. Carter."

"I may be able not only to ferret out the truth, as you said, but also to land Ambrose Floyd again behind prison bars."

"I'd give something, Mr. Carter, for the privilege of lending you a hand in doing that," Parker declared significantly. "It would help to ease my undying hatred for that knave."

"Well, well, we shall see," Nick replied. "Even that may become possible."

"I hope so, sir, on my word. I would not shrink from taking long and desperate chances to serve you in such a cause."

"Do not put your life in jeopardy, Horace, whatever you do," said Mrs. Scott, protesting mildly. "Remember that Stella never stood in greater need of a manly and reliable friend."

"That is true, God knows, and I shall not forget it," Parker gravely answered.

"By the way, Parker, has Mr. Nostrand any other wishes in regard to his daughter, that he is so tyrannical in opposing her affection for you?" Nick inquired. "Does he want her to marry any one else?"

"Yes, indeed. He is equally set upon that."

"Ah! that puts another iron in the fire. Who is Mr. Nostrand's choice?"

"His private secretary, James Greer, the devil take him!" Parker said bitterly. "He is not man enough to retire to the tall timbers, nor to have used his influence in accord with Stella's wishes. He persists in pressing his own suit, in spite of her aversion for him."

"He has influence over the old gentleman, has he?"

"Much more than his daughter, even, since she has incurred his displeasure by asserting her prerogative and insisting that she will marry me. Greer has been in Mr. Nostrand's employ for nearly twenty-five years, and he is almost like one of the family," Parker proceeded to explain. "He has looked after all of Nostrand's financial affairs, as well as his private correspondence, and the old man has absolute faith in him—an infernal sight more than I have."

"Do you know anything to his discredit aside from the relations mentioned?" asked Nick.

"No, I cannot say that I do."

"Are his habits good?"

"For all I know to the contrary."

"Do you suppose there is anything in Nostrand's past that may have given him a hold on him?"

"I never have suspected anything of the kind. Mr. Nostrand has always been an honorable man, I think, and it is hardly probable that Greer has any coercive influence over him. Nostrand has always liked Greer and the latter is sufficiently clever and farsighted to make the most of it. That's all I can tell you, Mr. Carter."

"That will do for the present," Nick replied. "Now, Mrs. Scott, with your permission, I will examine the contents of your husband's desk and safe. I wish to be alone while I do so. It will take me considerable time and I do not want my attention diverted. I know you will have no objection."

"Far from it, Mr. Carter, I assure you," Mrs. Scott replied.

Horace Parker at once arose to go, again shaking hands with the detective, and the two women accompanied him from the room.

Nick closed the library door, then seated himself at the desk of the missing lawyer.

CHAPTER V.

PATSY IN A BOX.

It was three o'clock when Patsy Garvan, following Nick's instructions, returned in disguise to the neighborhood of the Scott residence. An espionage in broad daylight required tact and caution, and Patsy could find no concealment from which he could watch the house without incurring detection. He could accomplish his object, however, by sauntering through the two streets adjoining the estate, and he had been thus engaged until nearly five o'clock, when his vigil was rewarded.

Very few would have observed, nevertheless, what Patsy's keen eyes were quick to detect. Turning from the side street to that fronting the estate, he saw an approaching touring car containing two men, both occupying the front seat. It was moving very moderately, and the chauffeur seemed to be intent only upon running the car.

His companion was a man in the forties, quite tall and slender, with rather thin features, black hair and eyes, somewhat sunken, and a peculiarly pale complexion. He looked like a man of culture and sedentary vocation, but his cadaverous face was not a prepossessing one.

He appeared at first sight to be gazing straight in front, for his head was not turned in either direction.

Furtively watching him while walking toward the car, however, Patsy quickly discovered that his eyes were fixed sharply upon the windows of the Scott residence, with a scrutiny that did not leave them as long as he could keep them in view without turning his head in that direction.

"Gee whiz! that ought to be my man," thought Patsy. "He was trying to size up things in this house, but so covertly as not to attract attention. If he's on the level, there's no need for such exceeding caution. If not on the level—by thunder, I reckon I'll not stand on ceremony. I'll find out who that guy is, if it takes a leg."

Glancing back while these thoughts flashed through his mind, Patsy saw the car turning the corner with increasing speed, turning it so quickly that he could not read the rear number plate. He also saw, however, a bicycle standing at the curbing in front of an opposite house.

Patsy did not wait to ask a youngster in the front yard whether he might use the bicycle. There was, indeed, no time for ceremony. Darting across the street and mounting the wheel, Patsy went spinning around the corner within ten seconds in pursuit of the departing car, then more than a hundred yards away. From behind him came frantic cries and yells:

"Here! Blast you, come back with my wheel! I'll have you pinched! Stop thief—stop thief!"

"Gee! it's a bit tough to cabbage the kid's go-cart, but I'll square it with him later," thought Patsy. "There is no time for explanations. Every second cuts ice."

Putting on a burst of speed, Patsy easily distanced the youngster, and without attempting to overtake the touring car he succeeded in keeping it in view until it stopped at a drug store in the business section of the city. The dark man then jumped from the car, and hurriedly entered the drug store.

Patsy dismounted a short distance back of the car, then entered the store and bought a glass of soda. His quarry had given a prescription to one of the clerks, and was waiting to have it filled.

"Hurry up with that," he was saying just as Patsy entered. "Mr. Nostrand is in bad shape and delays are dangerous."

"I'll have it for you in half a minute, Mr. Greer," was the clerk's reply.

"Mr. Greer," thought Patsy. "Delays are dangerous, eh? Not so dangerous, by Jove, but that he could take time to run to the Scott residence and look it over. I reckon I'd better trail this guy to cover, at least, since he don't look any too good to me. He's got a bad eye. He may be one of the Nostrand servants. On the other hand, he may be in the employ of some outside party, bent upon giving Stella Nostrand the worst of it. I'll stick around until I can find out."

Mr. Greer, while waiting, approached the soda counter and winked at the clerk.

"Some of the cough cordial, Ben," he said quietly. "You know about what size of dose I require."

The clerk grinned, then stepped into a back room, presently returning with an opaque tumbler, the contents of which Greer got outside of with a single swallow. He dryly remarked while paying for it:

"That relieves the tension. It's good for what ails you."

"Cough cordial be hanged! Spirits frumenti—more commonly termed plain whisky—is what went down his red lane," thought Patsy, quickly detecting the odor of the liquor. "Further evidence of his crafty and demoralized nature. I think I'd better find out under what kind of a tension he is laboring."

Patsy sipped his soda until Greer received a bottle wrapped in white paper and hastened out to the waiting car, in which he immediately departed.

"Who's the tall chap?" inquired Patsy, while paying the clerk.

"The man who just went out?"

"Yes."

"That's Jim Greer. He has been private secretary for a wealthy resident named Nostrand for over twenty years. He's got a snap, the softest kind of a snap."

"If my suspicions are correct, and I'd gamble a trifle on it, I'll put a crimp in that soft snap before long," thought Patsy, as he left the drug store and glanced after the departing men. "They are not returning in the direction of the Scott residence, which shows plainly enough that they must have gone out of their way in order to have a look at it. I'll take a chance, by Jove, that my time will not be wasted in trailing them."

Patsy's impressions were so strong, in fact, that he would not relinquish the pursuit. He remounted the bicycle and followed about a hundred yards behind the touring car, soon passing beyond an outskirt of the city and rapidly drawing nearer the Nostrand estate. When about half a mile from it, Patsy saw Greer throw something over a wall on one side of the road, and a moment later a crumpled ball of white paper was tossed from the car.

"What was that?" Patsy asked himself, slowing down. "He evidently got rid of something, and it looked like a bottle. Did he get a prescription filled only to throw away the medicine? I guess I'd better make sure."

Dismounting and leaping over the wall, Patsy quickly confirmed his suspicion. On a pile of stones, at which it evidently had been thrown in order to break it, lay the fragments of a bottle, the contents of which still were trickling in among the stones. On one of the frag-

ments was the druggist's label, with the number of the prescription and directions for taking.

"Gee! it beats me," thought Patsy, puzzled for a moment. "It's the bottle of medicine just bought by Greer, all right, but why the dickens has he thrown it away. It must be the same, for the paste on the label is hardly dry. Greer said he was in a rush to give it to the sick man, but this don't look much like it. I can size it up in only one way, that the medicine was bought for a blind. In that case, by gracious, there is something wrong in the Nostrand house. Is there a conspiracy in progress to put old Nostrand out of the way? I'll see what more I can learn before taking the back track."

Now convinced that he was on the right track, at least, Patsy put in his pocket the fragment of glass on which the label was pasted, thinking it might prove to be a valuable bit of evidence. He then resumed his pursuit, arriving at a corner of the Nostrand place just in time to see the chauffeur backing the car into the garage, while Greer was hurrying across the grounds toward the small rustic pavilion which overlooked the river.

The sun had set nearly half an hour before and daylight was rapidly giving way to dusk. Watching Greer for a moment, Patsy judged from his haste that he was going to the pavilion to meet some one, possibly to whom he intended reporting the result of his recent missions.

This suspicion carried Patsy a step farther. He lifted the bicycle over a wall, leaving it lying out of sight from the road. Then, sheltered by a hedge, flanking that side of the extensive grounds, he hurried cautiously in the direction of the pavilion, which was about a hundred yards from the road, and scarce twenty feet from the farther end of the hedge.

"I can easily overhear any discussion that occurs in that vine-covered bird cage," he muttered, the hedge still concealing him. "It will be dark in ten minutes, moreover, and if that black-eyed rat is really playing any devilish game here, I may find out what it consists of, and what other men have had a hand in it. If they—ho, by Jove, he's out there to meet a woman. Stella Nostrand, too, as sure as I'm a foot high."

Then within twenty yards of the pavilion, Patsy had caught sight of a fluttering skirt, and a moment later the wearer came around the corner of the pavilion, closely followed by Greer. Dropping flat upon the ground back of the hedge, Patsy could plainly see and hear the couple, and one glance at the girl convinced him of her identity.

For she was tall, graceful, and strikingly handsome, as Chief Daley had described her, though she then was very pale and frowning darkly, with a look of bitter aversion for this man who, quickly overtaking her, seized her by the arm and detained her.

"You wait a moment, Stella," he commanded, with sinister inflection. "I've followed you out here for a private conference with you, and I'm going to have it. This matter has got to be settled, Stella, and settled in the right way. It's for your own good and the welfare of all concerned."

"All concerned?" she haughtily echoed inquiringly. "Are there more concerned, then, than you and me? You talk in enigmas, Mr. Greer. I don't understand you."

"You know your father's wish, Stella, in regard to us. He is concerned to that extent, at least."

"It is utterly useless to discuss that, Mr. Greer," Miss Nostrand forcibly answered. "As I am the one chiefly involved, with all my hopes and future happiness at stake, I shall be governed by my own wish rather than by his."

"Even though he now is at death's door?" Greer demanded. "Have you no heart?"

"It would be worse than death for me to yield to his wish," Stella retorted.

"Am I so distasteful to you?"

"You know that you are, Mr. Greer, and always have been. I refuse to discuss this matter any longer."

"You wait one moment," Greer again insisted. "Suppose his life should be saved? Suppose a remedy could be found that will restore him to perfect health?"

"What do you mean by that?" Stella demanded, with a sudden, sharp suspicion leaping up in her eyes. "Why do you question me in that way?"

"I mean just what I say," Greer pretended to explain. "Suppose I should discover a remedy that will cure him?"

"Well, suppose you could—what then?"

"Would you in that case reconsider your refusal? Would you consent to marry me, and——"

"No!" Miss Nostrand sharply declared, interrupting. "I will never marry you under any circumstances. Do not infer, however, that I am undutiful. I might give my life to save my father, perhaps—but I would not give it to you."

"That's final, is it?" questioned Greer, scowling.

"Yes, final. You should have known it long ago."

"You'd better think it over," Greer covertly threatened her. "There will be mighty little time for that, too, for your father is rapidly failing. He may not last another week. Unless you consent, it may be too late for me to——"

"If you know of any remedy that might save him, Mr. Greer, and do not at once make it known to Doctor Gleason, you are even a greater cur than I have thought you," Stella again interrupted. "But I don't believe you know anything of the kind. You are base enough to adopt any subterfuge to coerce me. I despise you, and I refuse to talk with you any longer. Don't dare to stop me again, or I'll call for help."

Greer had made another move to detain her, but the girl thrust him aside with a shudder, then turned quickly away and hurried toward the house. The man remained standing where she had left him, gazing after her with a vicious gleam in his frowning eyes, and on his thin, cadaverous face an expression which Patsy Garvan easily interpreted.

"By Jove, I am right," he said to himself. "This rascal certainly is playing a desperate game to get Miss Nostrand and her fortune. Treachery sticks out all over him. He's a Judas who would double cross his best friend. I'll put Nick wise to all this, and——"

Patsy's train of thought was abruptly ended, and in a way at once convincing him that his designs were nipped in the bud.

Through the deepening dusk behind him came the voice of a man, gruff and threatening, and mingled with it the ominous click of a revolver, cocked for instant use.

"Get up, you rat!" he cried. "Stick up your hands, too, where I can see them. I'll find out in short order why you're nosing around here in this fashion. Up with them!"

Patsy was upon his feet at the first command so fiercely

uttered. Turning, he found himself confronting not one man, but two, both decently clad, but viciously determined fellows, one of whom held a revolver aimed point-blank at the detective's head.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MASTER KNAVE.

Though surprised and disgusted by the unexpected turn of affairs, Patsy Garvan was not a bit alarmed by the threatening situation. He saw at a glance, nevertheless, that the man with a gun meant business, and Patsy valued a whole skin too highly to disregard his commands. He threw up both hands, gazing with affected astonishment at the two men, while he coolly demanded:

"What's it all about? Why do you stick me up in this fashion? I've got no money to speak of, nor any valuables——"

"We don't want your money," the same man interrupted.

"Point that gun another way, then, will you? It might go off."

"It will go off, all right, if you drop your hands or attempt to leg it. We don't want your money—but we want you."

"It strikes me, then, that you have got what you want," Patsy said dryly. "But I'll be hanged if I see why you want me."

"You'll see soon enough," retorted the other; then, to his companion: "Tie his hands behind him, Tony, and signal Jim to join us. Ah, he's coming. That's all right. The skirt has not heard us."

Patsy now had sized up the two men more carefully in the twilight. He saw plainly that both were in disguise. The one called Tony did not impress him familiarly. The gleam in the eyes of the other, however, as well as the icy ring in his sinister voice, reminded Patsy of some one he had encountered in the past, but he could not then determine his identity.

He now saw, moreover, how the couple had happened to discover him playing the spy. They had approached by a near path leading down a sharp incline to the river, ascending it so quietly that he had failed to hear them. They also had seen Greer and Stella Nostrand through the hedge, and Patsy's mission there could not be mistaken.

He was considerably perplexed, nevertheless, to account for the relations existing between these two men and James Greer, which were plainly evident when the latter came running around the hedge and joined them.

"Great Scott!" he cried, upon seeing Patsy covered with the weapon of one man, while the other was hurriedly binding his hands behind him. "What's the meaning of this, Tony? Who the devil is this fellow——"

"Dry up, Jim, or you'll be shouting our names from the housetops," snapped the man with a revolver. "What have you been saying to that girl?"

Patsy caught his breath. Like a flash, when this man so far forgot himself as to speak in his natural tones, Patsy recognized his sinister, incisive voice.

"Ambrose Floyd, as sure as there's juice in a lemon," was the first thought that leaped up in his mind. "Gee! this does spell trouble. The game is bigger than I have suspected, since Floyd has a hand in it. His must be the master hand, moreover, since he never plays second fiddle."

That the last was true appeared in what followed, for Greer hesitated when so sharply questioned, shrinking in manifest confusion, and Floyd quite fiercely repeated:

"What were you saying to the girl? Out with it!"

"Out with nothing," Greer replied, with a defiant snarl. "Why do you speak to me in that way?"

"You know why?"

"Well, there's no occasion for it. I'm not the kind that plays double with a friend, think what you will about it. Why are you so infernally curious?"

"Because this rat overheard you—that's why," Floyd declared, with a frown as black as midnight. "If he—— Wait. Have you tied him fast, Tony? See whether he has a weapon—ah, I thought so! You come with us, Greer, and be quick about it. I want a word with you, as well as with this fellow."

"But——"

"There aren't any buts," Floyd sharply interrupted. "You'll do what I direct, or there'll be a smash in these parts that will carry you to the devil. Get a grip on this fellow's arm and bring him down to the launch. Wait—blindfold him! I'll soon find out whom we're up against and where we stand."

Tony, so called, had felt under Patsy's coat and found his revolver, which he hurriedly transferred to his own pocket. The sight of it, together with the attitude Greer had taken, seemed to arouse the worst part of the notorious forger's evil nature, and Patsy rightly guessed what he had in mind.

"He's got wise to my identity, all right," he said to himself, keenly appreciating his more desperate situation. "He suspects Greer of treachery, too, and not without reason, if what I overheard cuts any ice. But what kind of a game are they playing—that's the question."

Patsy then was given no time for serious consideration of the circumstances. Awed by Floyd's fierce threats, Greer hastened to assist in blindfolding their captive, after which he was rudely seized and guided to the path by which the two men had approached.

Stumbling downward in the increasing darkness, with only the grasp of two of the ruffians to steady him, Patsy was conducted down the hill to a black naphtha launch made fast at a narrow landing, from which he was rudely forced on board, and thrust into an unlighted cabin.

"Get away at once, Joe, and head for the house," Floyd brusquely commanded, addressing a fourth man who was seated near the engine.

Patsy heard the command, quickly followed by the chugging of the motor, and in a moment the launch swerved from the landing and sped up the river.

"Gee! I'm certainly in wrong," he grimly soliloquized, after listening vainly for further talk from his captors. "They must be heading for a boathouse, probably owned by Floyd's confederate. But who is he, and what kind of a job are they trying to pull off? Greer must be in league with them, and they evidently are slowly putting old Mr. Nostrand out of the way, but I'm blessed if I can see what they'll gain by doing that. He's worth a barrel of money, but that will go to his daughter, so they must have some other object in view.

"It must have been Floyd, however, who forged Scott's letter to his wife, and this must have been the gang who got away with the lawyer. But how in thunder was he in their way? Did he suspect their game? Was he in a

position to thwart it and expose the rascals? They must have had some reason for abducting him."

Viewing the circumstances from every standpoint, Patsy could hit upon no theory that seemed consistent with all of them, and he still was vainly racking his brain when the launch suddenly slowed down and presently came to a stop, bumping her fenders against another landing.

A few minutes later, after being roughly hauled out of the cabin and forced across a narrow float, Patsy found himself in a dimly lighted building into which all four of his captors had trooped, then quickly closed and barred the door.

Floyd's first step after entering was to remove the bandage from Patsy's eyes, after which he rudely snatched off the disguise masking his ruddy features.

"Ah, I thought so!" he cried, half in his throat. "I reckoned I couldn't mistake your figure, much less your prying methods. Sit down on that box, you rat, and don't speak until I'm ready to question you. If you do, I'll silence you in a way you'll not fancy."

Patsy obeyed as indifferently as if he had not the slightest interest in the proceedings. Though surprise was pictured in the faces of the three other men, he saw plainly that none of them recognized him, nor even suspected his identity.

Glancing around, Patsy also saw that the building was a long, roughly built boathouse, as he had anticipated, designed as winter quarters for the launch on which he had been brought there.

Only a bundle of sails, a quantity of rope, blocks and tackling, several pairs of oars, a small rowboat near one of the walls, a number of empty boxes, and numerous odds and ends required at times on the launch—these were all the place then contained.

The flame of a smoky oil lantern hung from a beam cast its feeble rays upon the scene, and on the grim and threatening faces of the four men into whose hands Patsy had fallen.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISSING LINK.

Nick Carter, then seated in front of the open safe in Lawyer Scott's library, heard the shrill cries of the youngster whose bicycle had been stolen:

"Stop thief—stop thief!"

That is a cry to which a detective instinctively responds.

Nick sprang up and strode to the window—just in time to see Patsy Garvan spin around the corner and vanish at top speed through the side street. Nick recognized him in disguise, even, and he immediately hit upon the truth.

"He has gone in pursuit of a motor car," he muttered. "He would not need a bicycle in order to follow any less speedy conveyance. By Jove, he may have seen the car containing Ambrose Floyd that Parker saw this morning. Patsy would recognize that rascal on sight, and if Floyd drove by this house, he did so only to see whether anything denotes that Scott's absence is being investigated. At all events, since Patsy evidently has caught on, I also must be on the right track. Before going farther, however, I'll relieve that youngster's distress."

Unable to overtake Patsy, the lad then was hurrying home to telephone to the police. Nick opened the window and whistled, then beckoned him to the house. The lad obeyed with some misgivings and surprise, but both were turned to absolute amazement and manifest satisfaction when Nick quietly confided his identity to the lad, and assured him that his bicycle would be safely returned, or a new one purchased for him.

"Jiminy crickets! I don't care half as much for the wheel as I did, Mr. Carter," he declared, gazing with wide eyes at the famous detective. "I'd be willing to lose it, sir, just for the sake of having helped you in a case. I have read all about you, sir, but never thought I'd be lucky enough to see and talk with you."

"Good boy!" said Nick, with a smile. "But don't forget that you must say nothing about me at present."

"Trust me, sir. I'll be as dumb as a wooden Indian."

Nick nodded approvingly and returned to his work. He already had searched the lawyer's desk, drawer after drawer, pigeonhole after pigeonhole, reading innumerable letters, scanning countless documents, and finding nothing that appeared to have any bearing upon the outrageous abduction.

He had been searching the safe for nearly half an hour when the interruption occurred, and he resumed the search with renewed zest. Private papers, personal letters, legal documents, and trust accounts, many of them in sealed packages, all were unceremoniously opened and examined, then hurriedly replaced when he found them obviously foreign to the case engaging him.

Not until six o'clock, after he had switched on the electric lights and drawn the curtains, did Nick discover anything that seriously impressed him. Then, from one of the small steel drawers containing numerous other papers, some already examined, he drew a large linen envelope inscribed with Lawyer Scott's coarse and heavy handwriting:

"Last Will of Randolph Nostrand. Executed October 1st, 1912."

"Less than a month ago," thought Nick, with an intuitive feeling that he had finally found the key to the mystery. "Scott is Nostrand's legal adviser and probably drew up his will. It has been placed in his keeping, and he very likely is named as executor. I'll find out."

Nick broke the seal, then drew out the will and read it—with brows steadily knitting more darkly and with lips more tightly compressed.

It evidently had been written by the missing lawyer. It bore Randolph Nostrand's signature, also those of three witnesses, and the customary seals.

In brief and divested of legal verbiage, it made moderate bequests to several local churches and charity organizations, the sum of one thousand dollars to each of his underservants, five thousand dollars to a cousin living in Colorado, and—"the rest and residue of my estate, both legal and personal, I give, devise, and bequeath, in return for his twenty-five years of faithful service, to my devoted private secretary, James Greer, and to his heirs and assigns forever.

"I also request that the said James Greer may be appointed sole executor of this, my last will and testament, and that he may be relieved from giving bonds."

Such, in brief, was the will made and executed by Randolph Nostrand.

The name of his only daughter was not even mentioned. The arbitrary old man, opposed in his wishes, defied by the one person whom he should have most dearly loved and considered, yet from whom he had required the great-

est sacrifice and submission, evidently had made good his cruel threat and completely disinherited her.

Nick Carter's eyes had taken on an ominous gleam. He gazed steadily at the floor for nearly five minutes. Outwardly he hardly stirred, but his brain was working rapidly.

Suddenly rising, he went to the telephone and called up his New York office. In half a minute he was talking with Chick Carter, his chief assistant. His communication was brief and to the point:

"I am at the Scott residence, Yonkers. Join me here as quickly as possible."

Chick's response was even more brief:

"I'll be with you in thirty minutes."

Nick hung up the receiver, then rang for the house butler.

"Ask Mrs. Scott and Marion to come here," he directed.

Both women joined him almost immediately. There then was nothing in the detective's face to suggest the nature of his thoughts. He still held in his hand the folded will, however, and had taken a chair near the library table.

"Be seated, ladies," said he. "I want you to answer a few questions."

"You have discovered something?" Mrs. Scott eagerly asked.

"I think so, but wish to be absolutely sure. Do not ask me to explain at present. Merely answer my questions."

"We will, Mr. Carter."

"To begin with, what is Randolph Nostrand's mental condition?"

"Terrible," said Mrs. Scott. "His brain is said to be paralyzed. He has not spoken, nor recognized any one, for more than a week."

"He could not be questioned, then, with any success?"

"Not the slightest."

"When was he first affected?"

"Nearly a month ago."

"Do you know in what way?"

"I do," said Marion. "He began to appear peculiar, confused, and irresponsible, and his strength began to fail. He took his bed two weeks ago and has been failing steadily."

"How many servants does he employ? Mention them for me."

"Mr. Greer, to begin with, whom we already have discussed. He——".

"One moment, Marion," Nick interposed. "You are well acquainted with him, of course."

"Yes."

"What are your impressions in regard to his nature, or character?"

"I think he is a crafty, designing, and treacherous man," said Marion decidedly.

"Has Mr. Nostrand never detected anything of that kind?"

"No, he has not. He employed Mr. Greer when the latter was only twenty years old, and Greer has been in his service ever since. He is too clever to have let Mr. Nostrand detect any of those characteristics which impress Stella and me so unfavorably. Mr. Greer is, in my opinion, a very artful man."

"That is sufficient," said Nick. "Now tell me—has Greer called here since Nostrand was taken ill?"

"Yes, indeed!" Mrs. Scott exclaimed. "Several times."

"For what?"

"To talk with my husband upon matters pertaining to Mr. Nostrand's affairs. Mr. Scott has always been his legal adviser."

"Was their talk usually held here in the library?"

"Yes, invariably."

"Can you recall whether at any time Greer was alone here?"

"Why, yes, on one occasion, at least," said Mrs. Scott thoughtfully. "He came in about half an hour before dinner was served, and he insisted upon waiting while Mr. Scott went to the meal. I invited Greer to join us, but he already had dined."

"How long ago was that?"

"Something more than a week. I think it was a day or two before Mr. Scott disappeared."

"Do you know whether the safe was probably open at that time?"

"I am sure it was, Mr. Carter. I stepped in here to ask Mr. Greer to join us, and I noticed that the safe door was wide open. But that was not unusual. Mr. Scott keeps nothing but private papers and legal documents in it, which are of no use to others."

Nick had a decidedly opposite opinion, but he did not express it. Instead, he proceeded rapidly with his inquiries.

"What other servants are there in the Nostrand house?"

"A cook, named Nora Foley, who has been with the family for fully twenty years."

"A trusty woman, then."

"Absolutely," Marion quickly declared. "Nora is devoted body and soul to Mr. Nostrand and Stella."

"Are there any others?"

"A maid named Jane Crest, and a chauffeur whose name is Tom Archer. They have been employed there for several years. There are no other servants, Mr. Carter, except a trained nurse provided by Doctor Gleason three weeks ago."

"Do you know her name?"

"Yes. It is Martha Dean."

"A young woman?"

"About thirty."

"A resident here?"

"No. She was brought from New York."

"How about Doctor Gleason?" said Nick. "How is he regarded as a physician?"

"Very highly," said Mrs. Scott. "I have no doubt that he is very skillful, but he is not a man whom I would care to employ."

"Why not, Mrs. Scott?" Nick inquired.

"For several reasons," she replied. "Doctor Gleason, though nearly fifty, is a man of sporting proclivities. He gambles and speculates heavily in the stock market. His habits, moreover, are not of the best. His wife divorced him three years ago, because of his violent temper and abusive treatment. Nevertheless, Doctor Gleason has an extensive practice and is generally popular. He has been Mr. Nostrand's family physician for many years."

"What is his full name?"

"Antony Gleason," said Marion. "He is more commonly called Tony Gleason."

"I think I have heard a specialist mentioned, whom Doctor Gleason called in consultation in Mr. Nostrand's illness," said Nick. "Am I right?"

"Yes," said Mr. Scott. "He is a German physician, named Klein, with whom Doctor Gleason was very friendly when studying abroad. It happened that Doctor Klein was

visiting him when Mr. Nostrand was taken ill. He was called into the case for that reason, and because he has made a special study of paralysis and nervous disorders."

"I see," said Nick, with eyes narrowed. "Is Doctor Klein still at Doctor Gleason's house?"

"I think so."

"Where does Gleason live?"

"Half a mile from here. He has a place overlooking the river. He has no children, but employs a housekeeper and a chauffeur, one Joseph Spark."

"Who is said to be in the same speedy class with Doctor Gleason," put in Marion. "That, perhaps, is why Doctor Gleason employs him."

"Yes, perhaps," Nick allowed, a bit dryly. "Now about another person. Who is Mrs. Charles Damon?"

"An intimate friend of ours and a neighbor of the Nostrands," said Marion, with a look of surprise. "What about her, Mr. Carter?"

"I inquire only for information," Nick replied evasively. "Would any suspicion against her——"

"It would be absurd—positively absurd!" Mrs. Scott put in forcibly.

"You are quite sure of it?"

"Absolutely sure. Why, I have known Mrs. Damon since we were children together. She is one of our representative women, and a person of sterling integrity."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I had no doubt of it."

"But you must have some reason for asking about her."

"True," Nick admitted. "Her name appears as the witness of a will which I have in my hand. It is a will executed by Mr. Nostrand about a month ago. I found it in your husband's safe."

"Certainly. That is entirely correct," Mrs. Scott said quickly. "The other two witnesses were Doctor Gleason and Nora Foley, the cook mentioned. My husband drew up the will about the first of this month, and it happened that all three witnesses then were at the Nostrand residence. They readily consented to witness his signature. My husband told me about it when he returned home and put the will in his safe."

"Did he mention any of the bequests, or provisions of the will?" Nick earnestly asked.

"Oh, no, indeed!" Mrs. Scott exclaimed, quickly shaking her head. "He never does anything of that kind. It would be very unprofessional."

"Decidedly so," Nick agreed. "I hardly expected an affirmative answer to my question. Have you ladies dined?" he added, quite abruptly.

"Dinner is ready, Mr. Carter, but that is of secondary importance," Mrs. Scott replied. "If you wish to ask——"

"I have ended my inquiries," Nick interposed. "I will not detain you any longer."

"But you surely will dine with us?"

"No, thank you," said Nick, smiling. "As you have remarked, Mrs. Scott, dinner is of secondary importance. I have no time to lose in this matter. Besides, I expect one of my assistants in a very few minutes. Direct your butler to show him in here when he arrives."

Mrs. Scott gazed at him with increasing surprise.

"But you surely will tell us what you have learned, or suspect, before we——" she again began.

"Pardon me for refusing, Mrs. Scott," Nick once more interrupted. "It would take me some time to tell you all I suspect. Nothing would be gained by it, moreover, and I would much prefer to tell you something more agreeable a little later."

"More agreeable—do you expect to do so?" Marion eagerly asked.

"I hope to do so," Nick assured her evasively. "Be content with that, please, for the present."

He arose and bowed the two women from the room while speaking, then quietly closed the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

"But what do you deduce from all this? You must have arrived at some very important conclusions, Nick, as well as have immediate designs of some kind, or you would not have summoned me so hurriedly."

Chick Carter was the speaker. He was seated with Nick in the Scott library, and the latter had just finished telling him all that he had learned, as has been set forth—but not all that he suspected.

It then was nearly seven o'clock.

"Several conclusions are undeniable," Nick replied. "I will tell you precisely what I suspect."

"Go ahead. I am all ears."

"I'll reconstruct the crime, Chick, as I now see it," Nick began. "The man behind the gun, or the master criminal, is none other than the notorious forger, Ambrose Floyd."

"I'm wise to that, all right."

"How he fell in with Greer and Doctor Gleason is not material," Nick went on. "They certainly are his confederates and evidently thought well of his infamous scheme. This man Greer, unable to win Stella Nostrand's love by fair means, now is out either to coerce her into marrying him, or to get her father's fortune."

"That seems to be about the size of it."

"We shall find later, I think, that Doctor Gleason is hard pressed for money, and that he has ventured into the scheme to repair speculative losses. Be that as it may, these three men are the chief crooks, with Ambrose Floyd directing the knavish job."

"Do you suspect others, also?"

"Yes."

"Namely?"

"The trained nurse provided by Doctor Gleason," said Nick. "Her name is Martha Dean. In spite of the fact that a competent trained nurse could easily have been obtained here in Yonkers, Gleason brought this woman from New York. That is significant. Such knavery as I suspect could not be done without the nurse's coöperation."

"Are there others?"

"I also suspect Gleason's chauffeur, Joseph Spark. For I think that Lawyer Scott was brought out here from New York in Gleason's touring car on the day he was abducted. He was deceived in some way and lured into riding out here with some of the gang. Becoming suspicious, he undertook to escape from them when at Shaw's lane, and evidently succeeded in getting out of the car. I think that a fight followed in the entrance to the lane, resulting in the downfall of the lawyer and the loss of one of his hands."

"That certainly appears reasonable," said Chick. "But what do you make of the scheme itself?"

"That may be quite briefly told," Nick replied. "Nostrand made a will about a month ago, which was drawn up by Scott and afterward taken in charge by him. We

can only conjecture what it contains. Only Nostrand himself and the lawyer who drew up the will were informed of its provisions."

"You don't think, then, that that will is the one you found in the safe?"

"Decidedly not," Nick said emphatically. "The will I found is a forgery executed by Ambrose Floyd. It is perfectly easy to see how that was accomplished. Greer, calling here to talk with Scott, contrived to steal the true will, thus enabling Floyd to forge the document I found this afternoon."

"I see."

"It was Floyd, also, who wrote the forged letter to Mrs. Scott, purporting to explain her husband's absence. He undoubtedly drew up this false will, imitating Scott's writing, and giving the bulk of Nostrand's vast property to his confederate, Greer. Having the genuine will, he easily could forge the writing and the several signatures."

"Sure thing," Chick exclaimed. "It would be child's play for that clever rascal."

"As is customary, mind you, neither witness knows what the true will contains," Nick proceeded. "All of them would readily swear to the forged signatures, if a contest should be made in court. All are reputable persons, barring Gleason, and his word would be acceptable under ordinary circumstances."

"That's true."

"This false will would stand in court, therefore, under ordinary conditions, and in view of all of the circumstances, it being generally known that Nostrand has threatened to disinherit his daughter if she persists in her determination to marry young Parker, which she has positively asserted that she will do."

"I follow you," Chick nodded.

"Very good. That's how the matter stood a month ago, when the true will was made. Now, in order to get by with this false will and realize on it, three steps became necessary," Nick proceeded. "One was to put it here in Scott's safe, where it would be found at the proper time. In other words, it had to be substituted for the other, which Greer had previously stolen."

"Certainly."

"Greer accomplished this by calling on Scott a few days before the latter's abduction. The other two necessary steps were, of course, to remove the only two persons who knew what the true will contains—Scott and Nostrand."

"Exactly."

"That is why Scott has been abducted. He may have been killed, or he surely will be, if the rascals were to find their scheme likely to prove successful."

"Undoubtedly," Chick agreed. "His return home would queer the whole business."

"His life, then, providing he still is alive, depends upon our thwarting these scoundrels," Nick continued. "Their game is, of course, to get possession of the Nostrand estate, Greer being the legal heir under the forged will. That's one reason why he is made the sole executor of it."

"Certainly. That's as plain as twice two."

"Now, concerning Nostrand, these rascals have very nearly accomplished their object. He is lying in the shadow of death. Whether we have made these discoveries in time to dispel it, remains to be seen. I think it doubtful, if his condition is as bad as stated. There must be no needless delay, therefore, in getting in our work. That must be done this very night."

"The sooner the better, Nick, surely," Chick agreed. "What are your plans?"

"There are several points to be considered," Nick replied. "We must find out, if possible, by what means Nostrand has been brought into his present condition of almost complete paralysis. It will not do to immediately arrest Gleason and Doctor Klein, however, whom I suspect is none other than Floyd himself. They would deny that any such conspiracy exists, and take a chance that it cannot be proved. In the meantime, Nostrand might die and leave this false will open to a successful contest by Greer, in spite of all we could allege, or do to prevent it."

"I see the point."

"We must contrive, therefore, to catch the knaves at their work, and to learn what drug, medicine, or what mysterious means, have been employed to thus affect Nostrand. That done, we may be able to find the remedy."

"That will be the better way, surely."

"That's the only way," Nick insisted. "Any other step will surely put the rascals on the defensive, causing a delay that may prove fatal to the sick man. In other words, Chick, we are literally working in the shadow of death. How possibly to dispel that shadow is now the only question."

"I agree with you again," Chick declared. "In every other respect, Nick, you have hit the nail on the head."

"Here is another point which leads me to think we can catch them at work to-night," Nick added. "More than two hours have passed since Patsy started in pursuit of one or more of this gang. I feel absolutely sure of that. If he has met with no mishap, I ought to have heard from him by this time. He knows this telephone number and has instructions to notify me as quickly as possible of any discovery he might make. He never neglects doing so."

"You think, then, that he has slipped a cog in some way."

"That is precisely what I think."

"And fallen into the hands of this gang?"

"Otherwise, Chick, he would have telephoned. I don't believe he can have gone to any locality where, if at liberty, he could not find a telephone."

"It does seem improbable, Nick, I'll admit," Chick said thoughtfully. "He may, indeed, have been cornered by this gang."

"In which case, of course, Floyd would immediately recognize him."

"Well, you bet!" Chick exclaimed. "Floyd has very good reason to remember all of us."

"That's the very point. He then will suspect that we are at work on this case," Nick argued. "He will become alarmed. He will reason that the scheme must be put through with a rush, that it now must be brought to a head before we can prevent it, or discover anything definite."

"You mean by ending Nostrand?"

"Exactly."

"That's why you think we may catch the rascals at work this very evening?"

"Certainly."

"By Jove, I begin to think you are right."

"There is something else we must find, if possible, providing it still is in existence."

"The genuine will, of course," said Chick quickly.

"Exactly. One moment, now, and I'll see what we can learn from the field on which, I hope, our final moves may be made."

"The Nostrand residence."

"That rings a bull's-eye."

Nick had summoned the butler while speaking, and he now directed that Marion be requested to join them. She complied in a very few moments, and Nick placed two chairs near the telephone.

"I want you to assist me, Marion," said he.

"I will do so gladly, Mr. Carter."

"I suppose you can talk with Stella Nostrand without causing any misgivings on the part of any other inmate of her home, if she should be overheard."

"Yes, indeed, I can," Marion declared. "Why, I talk with her several times each day."

"Very good," said Nick. "On this occasion, however, I want you only to begin the conversation, in order that she may recognize your voice and be sure of your identity. After that, I think I can imitate your voice so well that she will suspect nothing."

"Am I justified in doing this?" questioned Marion doubtfully.

"Entirely so, on my word," Nick assured her. "It is for her good and your own."

"Your word is sufficient, Mr. Carter."

"Call her up, then, and tell her that your father has not yet returned home," Nick directed. "Then ask her how her father is this evening. When she begins to reply, give me the receiver and I will continue the talk. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," said Marion, removing the receiver from its bracket.

Nick waited, faintly hearing the first conventional response that came over the wire. Then, when Marion asked the question he directed, Nick took the instrument from her and received Stella Nostrand's answer.

"Father seems a little weaker to-night, Marion, and I can see that he is steadily failing. There is to be another consultation of the physicians this evening. Doctor Gleason is going to bring Doctor Klein over here again. They may try other remedies."

Nick could not have heard anything that would have suited him better.

"What time do you expect them, Stella?" he inquired, so perfectly imitating Marion's voice that she laughed softly.

"About half past eight," replied Stella, unsuspicious. "Doctor Gleason telephoned from his residence a short time ago. By the way, something very extraordinary happened early this evening. It has made me very suspicious. I hardly know how to interpret it."

"What was it, Stella?" Nick asked.

"Mr. Greer happens to be out just now, so I can safely tell you. He asked me if I would marry him providing he could find a remedy that will restore my father. He almost intimated that he could do so, and that has made me feel very suspicious that something wrong is going on here. I hardly know what to do, or in whom to confide."

"I don't wonder that you are suspicious," said Nick. "Listen to me, Stella."

"Well?"

"I will send you a friend in whom you can safely confide and who will be of great service to you. He is an intimate friend of my father, and he now is here. I have told him all about your father's illness and he thinks it is very strange."

"But who is he, Marion?"

"Are you within hearing of any one in your home, Stella?"

"No, not one; I am sure of it."

"Listen, then, and be governed by my advice," said Nick, still imitating Marion's voice. "The man I refer to is Nick Carter, the New York detective. He will tell you just what you should do. You can make no mistake by following his advice."

"But when and where can I see him?"

"In precisely twenty minutes he will be under the porte-cochère at your residence. Not a word to any one, mind you, but steal out there and join him. Will you do so?"

"Gladly, Marion!"

"He will leave here at once."

"You give me hope."

"Trust me, he will give you more hope a little later. Meet him, therefore, and now good-by."

"Good-by. I'll surely meet him. In twenty minutes—under the porte-cochère."

Nick hung up the receiver and started to his feet.

The glow of anticipated triumph was shining in his eyes. He turned to Marion, and said quickly:

"Do not question me. Be patient a little longer. Now, Chick, we'll be off at top speed for the Nostrand residence."

"Danny is waiting with our car."

"We can cover the distance in less than twenty minutes," Nick added, as they hurried from the house. "There is to be a consultation within an hour. Consultation be hanged! I have measured the cloth to a nicety. There is a remedy, Chick, and we will find it. That genuine will exists and is in Greer's keeping, or he never would have made the proposal he made to-night. He asked Stella Nostrand if she—but I will inform you on the way."

They were nearing the touring car in which Chick had arrived about an hour before, and in a moment both were springing into the tonneau.

Danny saw at a glance that something was doing, even before Nick's quiet commands were uttered.

"To the Nostrand place, Danny, at record speed. Drop us a hundred yards this side of the grille gate, then run on a quarter mile and wait for us. Let her go lively!"

CHAPTER IX.

CROOKS IN CONFIDENCE.

There was a vicious gleam in the eyes of Ambrose Floyd. He was not a man to mince matters in the face of a desperate situation. Nor was he one to lose confidence in himself when seriously threatened.

He knew, the moment he recognized Patsy Garvan, that Nick Carter and his assistants were in Yonkers either to investigate Lawyer Scott's mysterious disappearance, or to look into the matters at the Nostrand residence.

That any living detective could have discovered the truth, ferreted out the dastardly game that was being played, anticipated the players' next moves and framed up a plan to checkmate them—that Nick Carter, or any other

man, could have accomplished all this in the limited time he had had, Floyd would not for an instant have believed.

He met the situation, therefore, precisely as Nick Carter foresaw that he would meet it. He went at it like a bull at a gate. He did not attach the slightest importance to the fact that Patsy Garvan, seated on a box in the dimly lighted old boathouse, might hear all that was said. He intended that the prying detective should never be able to make use of it.

Turning abruptly to Greer, after having snatched off Patsy's disguise, as before described, he repeated the question he had asked before leaving the Nostrand place that evening.

"Now, Jim, out with it. What passed between you and Stella Nostrand? What were you saying to that girl?"

"Why are you so set upon knowing?" demanded Greer, who had accompanied them to the boathouse under protest.

"That's neither here nor there," snapped Floyd. "I insist upon knowing. This infernal spy overheard you, and that——"

"He heard nothing of any consequence."

"I'll be the judge. See here!" Floyd swung sharply around and pointed to Patsy. "Do you know this fellow? His name is Garvan, and he is one of Nick Carter's shrewdest assistants. I guess that will jar you a little and cause you to open your mouth."

Greer started and stared apprehensively, while Tony Gleason shrank to one side and fell to fingering his disguise to make sure it was perfectly adjusted. The fourth man, Joe Spark, who served Gleason both as a chauffeur and to run the physician's launch, turned as pale as if he had suddenly seen a ghost.

"Gee!" thought Patsy, observing them. "Nick's name alone knocks the bottom out of a crook's sand box. I must find some way to give these miscreants the slip."

Noting the effect of his ominous announcement, Floyd took up the reins he had briefly dropped.

"Keep your eye on this rat, Joe, while I am talking with Greer and Tony," he commanded. "Bind his arms and legs with marline, and make sure he is here to stay—until I'm ready to dump him into the river. Come here, both of you, and listen to me."

The last was addressed to Gleason and Greer, both of whom went with him to a corner of the boathouse. With voice lowered, Floyd then forcibly declared:

"Now, Jim Greer, I want the whole truth out of you. I must know precisely what we are up against. Did you go by the Scott place, as I directed?"

"I certainly did," Greer now said readily. "But there was nothing doing, no sign of anything."

"There is something doing, or Nick Carter would not be in Yonkers, nor that rat nosing around the Nostrand place," Floyd forcibly pointed out. "Something is known, or suspected, and the Carters are out to learn the whole truth. We can beat them only by working together, and you've not been doing that, Jim."

"Why haven't I?" Greer demanded. "In what way have I gone lame?"

"You got away with that genuine will and have refused to give it up," Floyd fiercely snarled. "I now know why you have insisted upon keeping it."

"You do, eh?"

"You want it as a hold over me. Either that, or you think you can coerce that girl into marrying you, in which case you would pull the old man out of the fire, chuck us by the board, and feather your own nest with the girl's inheritance when it comes to her in the natural order of things. Hark you! Do you know what I'll do before I'll stand for any such treachery as that?" Floyd added, grasping Greer by the throat. "I'll strangle you—strangle you as I would a cat."

Greer threw off Floyd's hand, but his sallow face had gone as ghastly as if the threat had been executed.

"You're wrong, Floyd," he protested hoarsely. "I'd not do anything of that kind."

"No, no, Ambrose, I don't think he would," put in Gleason earnestly. "Heavens, that would be the limit."

"I'll prove that I wouldn't," Greer added. "I'll give you the genuine will to-night. I'll take any chance that you will, Floyd, to carry out our scheme. That's got to be done. We have gone too far to turn back."

"That's right, too," Gleason coincided. "I'm all in unless we can turn this trick successfully."

"Where is the will?" Floyd demanded.

"In a secret drawer in the library desk. I'll take it out to-night and give it to you."

"See that you do, then," said Floyd, somewhat appeased. "Now, here's the situation: If the Carters are on this case, as appears obvious, we've got to wind up the risky work on the job as quickly as possible. The old man must be finished. The lawyer must be permanently gotten rid of, as well as that rat yonder. The will in your favor must then be obtained from the Scott safe by appealing to his wife, in order that we may have it in our own hands and probate it as quickly as possible."

"I agree with you," said Gleason. "The sooner all this is done, Floyd, the better."

"The old man can be finished to-night," Floyd continued. "An additional quantity of radium would end him. Martha Dean can be trusted to put it into the button, and Nostrand will croak before noon to-morrow."

"He'll croak, all right, if the quantity is increased," growled the physician.

"It must be done," Floyd insisted.

"As well done now as later," said Gleason.

"When we go into your house, then, we'll phone the nurse that we will hold a consultation at half past eight," said Floyd, addressing the physician. "You can slip her the tube while we are there, and give the necessary instructions. She will do the work, all right, for what she is being paid."

"Humph!" grunted Gleason. "Trust her for that."

"We'll call that part settled, then," Floyd continued. "Did you get the false prescription filled, Jim?"

"Yes, of course, and I have chucked the stuff away."

"Never mind that part of it. The druggist will testify, if we are ever called down, that we purchased the ordinary and proper remedies."

"I've fixed that all right."

"Now, Jim, you return home and direct Archer to keep a sharp eye around the house to-night. One spy may be only a harbinger of others. Gleason and I will show up there about half past eight for the consultation. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, of course, and I'll do my part," said Greer.

"No other steps can be taken to-night," added Floyd. "Now for a word with this rat, Tony, and then we'll hike into the house and don our professional apparel. It will be eight o'clock before we know it."

"It's only a little after seven," said Gleason.

"But time flies," Floyd growled, approaching Patsy, who now was bound hand and foot and lying on the floor. "That's well done, Joe. But see you keep a constant eye on him until we return. He's a slippery devil."

"He'll never give me the slip," replied Spark grimly. "I'll go hang myself if he does."

"You'll hang, all right, if I do," thought Patsy.

"You see, Garvan, I know you," Floyd sneered, glaring down at him.

"You've got nothing on me in that respect," Patsy coolly retorted. "I know you as well, in spite of that seaweed you are wearing."

"You do, eh?"

"Yes. You are Ambrose Floyd."

"Much good it will do you for having discovered that," snapped the forger. "I'll end your career by this time to-morrow."

"You'd better do it at once and make a sure thing of it," said Patsy defiantly.

"There'll be time enough."

"Don't bank too strong on it. I know how to use time to advantage."

"You'll get no chance to make use of it. Who has employed Nick Carter up this way?"

"Hunt him up, Floyd, and ask him. He'll tell you all about it when he sees you. Take my word for that."

"You mean, I suppose, that you'll not give away anything."

"That's just what I mean," said Patsy.

"Well, he'll not see me, Garvan, if I see him first," Floyd declared, with a villainous chuckle. "I'll end this talk with you when other matters are not so pressing. Mind what I have told you, Joe, and watch him constantly. We'll show up again before midnight."

"I'll be here, all right—and so will he," Joe Spark said gruffly. "If he moves foot or finger, I'll knock his block off."

"We'll get a move on, then," cried Floyd, turning to Greer and the physician. "You head for home, Jim, and put Archer on the watch. We'll see you again about half past eight, and——"

Patsy turned his head to gaze after them, listening, but he could hear no more. The three crooks had passed out and closed the heavy door, leaving him to his bitter reflections on the boathouse floor, and under the lowering eye of his solitary guardian

CHAPTER X.

IN THE GLOOM OF NIGHT.

The glare of white light rushing over the gray suburban road, leaping from side to side with every slight turn of the speeding car, throwing into momentary relief each object upon which it fell, a wall, a tree, some isolated roadside dwelling, only to instantly leave them in deeper darkness because of the contrast, as a lightning flash reveals an entire landscape in the wink of an eye—it seemed hardly to pause in its onward course, when two dark figures leaped from the car and sought the side of the road within a hundred yards of the Nostrand estate.

It then was after eight o'clock—leaving brief time indeed to head off the knavery in progress and clinch each nail that had been driven into the mysterious case engaging the detectives.

"We'll avoid the driveway," Nick said quietly. "We'll steal back of this hedge and cross the grounds nearer the house."

"I'm with you," Chick murmured.

Both were in disguise, and Nick, while speaking, leaped over the low wall where the hedge began. He nearly fell over a bicycle lying on the ground.

"Hello! This does settle it," he muttered, while both paused briefly.

"The wheel Patsy borrowed."

"Surely."

"You were right, then. He was on the track of some of this gang."

"And he left the wheel here in order to go to the house, or some part of the grounds," Nick quickly reasoned. "Not having returned after so long a time, clinches my suspicion that he now is in their clutches. Floyd has guessed the truth. That is why the crook physicians are coming here to-night. They have got Scott and are out to end Nostrand, hoping to get by with the forged will."

"That's about the size of it," Chick agreed.

"We'll balk that job and find Patsy later, all right," Nick quietly added. "Come on this way."

They proceeded cautiously back of the hedge, over the same ground Patsy had traversed more than two hours before. They had covered about thirty yards, and were then about as far from one side of the large colonial house, when Nick suddenly halted and checked his companion.

The dark figure of a man, easily discernible through a break in the hedge, was approaching from the direction of the garage.

"It's Archer, the chauffeur, here," Nick whispered. "He saw our car pass the grille gate and is out to nose around a bit. This shows that he also is in the game. He had been directed to watch out for spies. We must get him at once, Chick, and get him quietly."

"He'll pass within ten feet of this opening."

"I know it. Leave him to me."

Nick crouched lower, close to the opening in the hedge, and drew his revolver. Around the butt of it he quickly wrapped his handkerchief, then gripped it by the barrel.

Peering down the driveway and across the starlit grounds nearer the road, but without a thought of the near hedge, the chauffeur passed within eight feet of the crouching detectives.

Nick let him pass, then covered the distance with a single bound. The weapon rose and fell with a dull thud upon Archer's head. He dropped without so much as a groan, insensible, and Chick quickly approached with a pair of handcuffs.

"He's only stunned, but we'll have him well in hand before he revives," said Nick quietly. "This will make our work all the easier. The rascals within will continue to feel sure that they are well guarded outside. There is no sign yet of the physicians. Floyd and Klein are one and the same, you can bet on that."

"It's a safe gamble, indeed," said Chick.

"We'll lose no time in fixing this rascal so that he cannot escape, or contrive to warn his confederates."

It took the two detectives only a very few moments to do so, and they left Archer not only gagged and bound hand and foot, but also securely tied to a tree some thirty yards from the Nostrand grounds. Then, feeling sure they were safe from observation, they quietly approached

the house and sought the deeper darkness under the porte-cochère.

They found Stella Nostrand awaiting them.

Though she was much surprised at seeing two men, instead of the one she was expecting, Nick very quickly and quietly explained the situation, giving her far more hope than she had expected to receive, and causing her to readily lend her aid to the plans he already had laid.

"Where is Greer?" he inquired, after the explanations had been made.

"He is at dinner," whispered Stella. "He came in very late."

"Do you know where he had been?"

"I have no idea, Mr. Carter."

"We shall learn later," Nick confidently predicted. "While he is at dinner, then, will it be perfectly easy for you to conceal us in the house?"

"Yes, indeed. I will admit you at once."

"One moment," said Nick, detaining her. "I will hide in the rear parlor, where I see there is no light. Can I see into the library from that room?"

"Yes. The doors are nearly opposite."

"Good. Now, in regard to Chick, I want him concealed on the veranda roof, upon which the windows of your father's room open."

"I will conduct him up the side stairs and through my own room, from which he can step out of the window," said Stella.

"Capital!" Nick quietly exclaimed. "That done, Miss Nostrand, you must go into your father's room and contrive, without being seen by the nurse, to raise one of the curtains about two inches, and also unlock the window. Can you accomplish both unsuspected?"

"Easily," said Stella confidently.

"Having done so, you may rejoin me in the rear parlor, providing you can do so without incurring suspicion," Nick directed. "I then will give you any additional instructions that I may wish you to follow. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"See if the way is clear, then, and we'll delay no longer."

Three minutes later, Nick Carter was concealed in the rear parlor, and Chick was crouching on the veranda roof at one of the windows of the sick man's chamber. He had been waiting only a few moments when Stella, while talking with the nurse, stealthily raised the curtain a trifle, and quietly threw the lock.

Chick then could see the entire room, the failing man on a bed in an alcove, lying there in the shadow of death, the nurse seated near a table on which were several bottles and tumblers, containing medicines that were provided only for a blind. She was a slender woman with red hair and crafty gray eyes, this Martha Dean, and she appeared to have no interest in Stella's movements, nor even glanced after her when she left the room.

Twenty minutes passed.

A glare of light appeared in the distant road, flashed up the long driveway, and Doctor Gleason in company with the said Doctor Klein, a man ostensibly with a profuse growth of auburn hair and whiskers, alighted from a runabout and entered the house.

Five minutes later, divested of their outside garments, they entered the chamber and closed the door.

Chick listened vainly, for their subdued whispers failed to reach his ears.

He could see them plainly, however, and noted their every move. Gleason examined the patient carefully, taking his pulse and temperature, and then he glanced at the others and winked. He then talked with the nurse for nearly ten minutes, giving her a small tube of very thick glass and a tiny pair of pincers, which she hid back of a vase on the mantel. The two men then departed.

Martha Dean at once approached the bed. Raising the sick man's head, she removed a gold button from the back of the neckband of his nightgown. Handling it gingerly, she put it in a plate on the table, then turned to get the tube and pincers.

Then, like a flash, Chick Carter hit upon the truth.

"Radium!" he murmured. "That button is charged with a particle of radium. When continuously near the spinal cord and under the base of the brain, it is gradually causing complete paralysis. A very similar crime was recently committed in France, and from that Gleason and Floyd got their idea for this devilish scheme. It's plain enough, now. They are going to add enough radium to that in the button to cause speedy death. I'll prevent that, at least, if this jade opens that tube to—no, she's not going to do it yet. She's stealing into the hall to listen."

Martha Dean had left the room and vanished toward the stairs.

Chick remembered the location of them. He glanced at the door and saw that it had been left ajar. He raised the window noiselessly and entered the room, then crept to a position back of the door when the returning woman should open it.

Chick had not long to wait. He heard her approaching steps within half a minute. He let her enter and pass beyond to edge of the door, then seized her from behind and clapped one hand over her mouth.

"Silence! Not a sound!" he sternly whispered. "You are under arrest for——"

He broke off abruptly. There was little need for his stern commands. Martha Dean had fainted in his arms.

Nick Carter had in the meantime been waiting silently in the darkness of the rear parlor. Following his instructions, Stella had switched on the library lights and then waited to receive the physicians. They came before Greer had finished his dinner, though he immediately came into the library to join them.

Little was said of consequence to the listening detective until Gleason and Floyd, whom Nick plainly recognized, left the library to go upstairs, when Greer accompanied them into the hall.

"Don't forget what you are to hand me when I come down," Floyd said to him pointedly.

"I'll get it for you," Greer nodded, then drew back to return to the library.

Stella Nostrand, as Nick had further directed, had vanished to another part of the house.

Greer evidently was pleased to find her gone. He hastened to a tall, old-fashioned desk in one corner, out of which he quickly sprung a concealed panel, revealing a thin secret drawer in the woodwork. Out of it he took a large document envelope, which he was about to thrust into his pocket when, sending a chill down his spine, he heard—Nick Carter's cold, threatening voice.

"Hand me that will, Mr. Greer, and keep quiet. If you speak above a whisper, or utter a cry, you'll never speak again."

Nick had closed the library door and had the wretch covered with his revolver.

Greer wilted as if his every drop of blood had turned to water.

"God!" he gasped, sinking upon a chair, "I'm done for!"

"Done for is right," said Nick sternly. "I guess you know me without an introduction."

"Are you—are you—Nick Carter?" Greer faltered, with twitching lips.

"That's precisely who I am."

"It's all off, then. I cave—I cave," groaned the arrant cur, burying his face in his hands.

Nick handcuffed him, slipping the will into his own pocket, and then locked him in a closet in the hall. Returning to the library, he opened the will and looked at it. One glance was enough.

Randolph Nostrand had, in this genuine will, bequeathed nearly his entire estate to his only daughter.

"H'm, that's more like it," thought Nick complacently. "I guess his opposition to Parker was, in reality, only the kick of a peevish and perverse old man. This will delight Stella, and——"

Nick was interrupted by a low, familiar whistle and a tapping on the library window. He turned quickly and beheld—Patsy Garvan.

"Well, well, where do you show up from?" was Nick's first inquiry, while he quietly raised the window to admit his grinning assistant.

"Gleason's boathouse down on the river," Patsy hurriedly whispered.

"What's down there?"

"I was—but ain't," chuckled Patsy, after entering and closing the window. "The rascals got me and left me there bound hand and foot in charge of a chap named Spark. He thought he could look after me. He'd have made good, all right, I guess, if it hadn't been that some one began groaning in a loft room in one end of the house."

"Caleb Scott?"

"That's what," said Patsy. "Spark went up to silence him with some kind of a drug, and that was my cue to get busy. I had a piece of a broken bottle in my pocket. I'll tell you later where I got it. I managed to get it into my hand and with it I cut my bonds."

"Good on your head."

"That settled it, all right," added Patsy. "I nailed Spark before he got in his work on the lawyer. He won't move till I return to get him. You can bet on that."

"But what of Scott?" Nick anxiously inquired.

"He's lost a hand, all right, but the stump has been doctored by Gleason and is in proper condition. So is the man himself, barring that he's a bit used up. I left him to hurry up here, for I heard three of the gang discussing some job for this evening. I reckoned I'd better butt in and prevent it. Gee! I was surprised when I peered in here and saw you nailing Jim Greer."

"It would be too bad to prevent anything that is really coming off here this evening, Patsy," smiled Nick. "I've got the entire case down pat, now, and all hands as good as nailed. Gleason and Floyd—ah, they now are coming. Crouch back of that easy-chair, Patsy. I'll waste no time in holding them up."

Patsy darted back of a large chair in one corner.

Nick stepped back of a portiere masking a doorway, quickly removing his disguise and drawing his revolver.

Floyd and Gleason came striding into the room. The former glanced sharply around and exclaimed:

"Hello! Where's Greer? He was to hand me——"

"I'll hand you something, instead," said Nick, stepping forward with his weapon leveled. "Take a tip from me, now, and be careful. If either of you rascals show the first sign of fight, he'll be put to bed with a shovel. Get up, Patsy, and help secure them."

Patsy was up and ready on the instant.

Gleason, like Greer, had collapsed completely.

Ambrose Floyd, though he at first reached involuntarily for his gun, instantly thought better of it. He sat down, hooking his thumbs through the armholes of his vest, and snarled with vicious hatred:

"May you, Carter, be eternally damned! You are the worst ever!"

"So are you, Floyd, in your knavish class," Nick retorted.

"Well, it looks now as if I'd pay the fiddler," scowled Floyd. "But how did you do it? How the devil did you do it?"

"I have methods of my own for doing things to rascals like you," Nick coldly replied. "I'll make very sure this time, too, that you pay the fiddler."

Nick proved as good as his word, for Floyd later was sentenced to fifty years in the State prison under the habitual criminal act, and he still is there and likely to stay there till death releases him.

Gleason, Greer, and their three hirelings, Archer, Spark, and Martha Dean, were let down with ten years each.

It would be vain to attempt to depict the gratitude of the Scotts, the Nostrands, and of Horace Parker, when the truth was disclosed, the lawyer restored to his home and family, and Randolph Nostrand brought into a fair way for speedy recovery. For the shadow of death had been dispelled, as Nick had hoped, and the outcome was all his big and brave heart could desire.

Nostrand no longer opposed the marriage of his daughter, and she was wed to Horace Parker within three months.

Marion Scott was the bridesmaid, and very nearly as happy as the bride herself.

It was found after the smoke had cleared, that all of Nick Carter's deductions and theories had been entirely correct, as he had outlined them in the foregoing pages; but as the proof of a pudding is in its eating, that might well have gone without saying. Aside from the generous reward received for their splendid work, it was a source of infinite satisfaction to Nick and his assistants that, as Patsy expressed it, "they had canned Ambrose Floyd forever."

THE END.

In the next issue of this weekly, No. 82, out April 4th, you will find an absorbingly interesting story entitled, "The Terrible Game of Millions; or, Tracking Down the Plotters."

WATERPROOF PAPER.

To make waterproof paper, take twenty-four ounces of alum and four ounces of white soap, and dissolve in two pounds of water and two ounces of gum arabic; then

dissolve six ounces of ordinary glue in two pounds of water, and when all the articles are thoroughly dissolved mix all the ingredients together into a vessel, and when you want to prepare the paper make the solution warm and dip the sheets of paper into it, and then hang the sheets of paper so prepared on a line and leave them to dry.

Silhouette or Shadow?

Or, A QUESTION OF EVIDENCE.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

SOMETHING WRONG.

"Mr. Officer! Mr. Officer!"

"Yis, mum!"

And Patrolman Patrick Maginnis gallantly tapped the rim of his gray helmet with the tip of the locust dangling jauntily from his wrist, and turned on his heel with military precision and toward the person who had addressed him.

This son of the "ould sod" was a new officer on the day force of the police patrol, and was proud of the distinction. His uniform was as fresh and bright as the circle of bright red galways adorning his roseate Irish face. He had a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his broad mouth, for the party who had addressed him in his official capacity was a woman.

The party in question was a corpulent matron in middle life, with her large, round face reflecting at just that moment a state of serious mental anxiety and distrust.

She stood bareheaded on the stone steps of a reputable lodging house, one of a long, brick block in a rather bohemian quarter of the city. A narrow yard about three feet in width fronted each of the several houses, and was separated from the brick sidewalk by a wicked-looking picket fence of iron.

It was after ten o'clock on a cold winter morning, and the sun was shining.

"Yis, mum!" repeated Policeman Patrick Maginnis.

The woman came down the steps to impart her communication more confidentially, for the passers-by were numerous.

"I'm afraid there is something wrong with one of my lodgers, sir," she anxiously explained. "Would you mind advising me?"

"Is it a man or a woman, mum?" inquired Maginnis, possibly with an eye to contingencies.

"A man, sir! A young man named Carroll Banks."

"And phat makes you think there be anything wrong with him, mum?"

"Because he is not up yet, and it is nearly eleven o'clock."

"Not yit, mum!"

"Well, he never lies abed like this, and his door has been locked and the key taken away."

"Phat's your name, mum?"

"My name is Nancy Stratton."

"D'ye keep this lodging house?"

"I do, yes! But what has that to do with it?" protested the woman. "If the lodger——"

"You will plaze answer me questions, mum, if ye want me advice!" counseled Mr. Maginnis, with an air of serious profundity. "Have ye banged good and hard on the man's door?"

"I have!"

"And he didn't wake up?"

"He did not! If he had, do you think I'd be out here palavering with you?" cried Mrs. Stratton angrily. "What kind of an officer are you, anyway?"

"I know my bizness, mum!" frowned Mr. Maginnis, with pursed lips. "How d'ye know the man's not gone out?"

"Because he never takes his key with him!" was the sharp rejoinder. "Besides, he was in his room late last evening, and has not been seen since. I feel sure he's in the room now, in one state or another!"

"Phat room is his, mum?" asked Mr. Maginnis, with oily imperturbation.

"It's the third floor front!" snapped the matron.

The patrolman backed away as far as the curbing, and, with an indescribable expression of study on his florid face, stared up at the plain red front of the lofty building.

But the closed windows of the third floor front conveyed to his mind no appreciable fund of information.

While he thus stood gazing, a quick, authoritative voice from near by sounded in his ears.

"What's the trouble, officer?"

Like a flash it brought Patrolman Maginnis to "attention."

And he at once recognized the erect, athletic figure and clean-cut, forceful face of the young detective, Sheridan Keene.

"Bedad, sir!" cried Maginnis, saluting, "this woman says there be something wrong wid one of her lodgers."

Keene swung round to the waiting woman.

"Why do you think there is anything wrong, madam?" he demanded gravely.

In a few words conveying about the same information as before, Mrs. Stratton explained the situation, which the detective thought best to investigate.

"I will go up to the room with you," he said shortly. "Lead the way."

"Begorra!" said Mr. Maginnis to himself, as the detective entered the house with the corpulent matron; "that divil of a Keene must be after thinking there's something wrong, as well as the woman! Sure, phat'll I do but be after sendin' word to the chafe inspictor!"

CHAPTER II.

THE CRIME IN THE BOHEMIAN QUARTER.

Keene followed the woman into the hall. It was carpeted with a heavy Wilton, comparatively new. Well-furnished double parlors lay to the right, with a dining room off the end of the hall.

In the latter room a group of three or four women were standing, apparently talking in subdued tones, and with mystified and anxious faces.

Before climbing the stairs, which made upward opposite the front door, the landlady paused to ask, rather doubtfully:

"You spoke to the officer like one in authority, sir. Are you?"

"Yes, madam. My name is Sheridan Keene. I am a detective."

"Then I am glad you happened along, sir. Please come this way. I will show you Mr. Banks' door."

"What is the man's full name, madam?"

"Carroll Banks, sir."

"Ah! I know of him. How long has he been lodging here?"

"For ten days, sir. He came here a stranger. May I ask you to tell me just who he is?"

"If you are wrong in your apprehensions, and nothing out of the ordinary has occurred, Mr. Banks himself can inform you, if he so desires. That is not my business."

It was said with quiet courtesy, but in a way that gave no encouragement to further inquiries, and already the two had ascended the second flight of stairs and reached the third landing. There still was one above.

Mrs. Stratton at once indicated a door toward the front.

"That is the room, sir."

Keene listened for a moment, then bent and sniffed at the keyhole, and finally knocked loudly on the panel.

The summons brought no response.

Silence only—a silence that became irresistibly grim and uncanny as the moments passed.

"I've tried knocking, sir, in vain," muttered Mrs. Stratton dubiously.

"There is no odor of gas," rejoined Keene. "How do you know that Mr. Banks has not gone out?"

"I don't know, sir! I know only that he was here late last night, and has not been seen this morning. Besides, he never has locked his door in this way and carried off the key."

"Haven't you a duplicate key?"

"No, sir, I have not, and Mr. Banks knows it. He has always left the door unlocked, so that I may enter to put the room in order."

Here two of the women whom Keene had noticed in the dining room came timidly up the stairs. One was young and pretty, and quite stylishly dressed. The other was a sallow spinster by the name of Quincy, with a very yellow skin, and with golden ringlets to match. Having overheard what last had been said, the saffron maiden approached, and aired her convictions in quite a decisive fashion.

"I'm just positive that some awful thing has happened in that room!" she declared shrilly, shaking an animated accompaniment with her yellow curls. "I heard terribly angry voices in there last night, and not a sign has been seen of Mr. Banks this morning. I slept hardly a wink all night, I was so nervous."

"Step back a little," Keene now said curtly; "and I'll try to force the door."

And drawing away a few steps, while he waved the women aside, the detective threw all his weight against the closed door. Twice and thrice this was repeated, but the stanch woodwork held firm, and the landlady ventured to exclaim nervously:

"I'm afraid you'll hurt yourself, Mr. Detective!"

"Don't be alarmed about my hurting myself," said Keene shortly. "Is there a locksmith near?"

"Two blocks away, sir."

"Send for him," commanded Keene. "I'll wait. There is no occasion for battering down the door."

The spinster's stylish companion at once volunteered to go for the smith, and Keene nodded his approval and coolly took a seat on the upper flight of stairs, the landlady and Miss Quincy standing nervously in the narrow hall.

Addressing the latter, the detective took up her recent observations.

"You say you heard voices in altercation last night, my good woman. Where were you at the time?"

"In my room, sir. That one back there."

"Could you distinguish what was said?"

"No, sir; only the sound of the voices."

"Men's voices?"

"Two of the speakers were men, and one a woman," replied Miss Quincy. "Or, rather, sir, she was but little more than a wisp of a girl."

"You saw her, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"How was that?"

"When I came to my door to lock it for the night, I opened it for a moment to glance into the hall. The girl had just come out of this room, and was hurrying down the stairs."

"Was she alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you describe her?"

"I caught only a glimpse of her, sir," demurred Miss Quincy. "But she seemed to be a slight girl of about medium height, and with a very pretty face."

"Light or dark?"

"Dark, sir, I should say, though she struck me as being very pale. But perhaps that was my imagination, sir, for after hearing such angry voices I guess I was quite pale myself."

"How old should you say the girl was?"

"About nineteen or twenty, sir."

"Did she leave the house at once?"

"I think so. I heard her close the front door."

"Do you know when she came here?"

"She probably came in with Mr. Banks, for I heard him enter his room, and presently the sound of both their voices."

"Were they in anger at that time?"

"Oh, no, sir! Quite the contrary, for I heard them laughing. I do not think there was any trouble till after the other man came."

"He came in later, did he?" asked Keene, with an interest that was steadily increasing.

"I did not hear him enter. Yet I imagine so, sir, for I did not hear his voice till later."

"Didn't he knock at Mr. Banks' door before entering?"

"I did not hear him."

"What time was it when you heard the dispute?"

"About a quarter after eleven."

"Before the girl had gone?"

"Both before and after."

"Then the strange man remained after the girl had gone?" exclaimed Keene.

"Yes, sir."

"You are sure of that?"

"I am positive, sir! It was after the girl left that the dispute became the most violent."

"Did you hear any indications of a personal conflict?"

"No, sir. It appeared to be a conflict of words only."

"Could you identify the stranger by the sound of his voice?"

Miss Quincy hesitated, but finally shook her ringlets.

"I don't think I could, sir," she replied doubtfully. "It was quite a deep, heavy voice and that's all I can say of it. I could not distinguish a single word that was said, sir, and I did not see the stranger at all. Neither did I hear him depart."

"And all this occurred about eleven o'clock?"

From then till the half after, sir."

"Mrs. Stratton, has it been the habit of this man Banks to receive——"

"Oh, sir, here is the locksmith!"

Detective Keene now was beginning to apprehend something serious in the affair, but the appearance of a slouch hat over the baluster rail, and the diminutive figure of a bent man laboriously climbing the stairs at the heels of the stylish young lady, led him to drop further inquiries until he should have established actual need for them.

The locksmith shambled into the hall, jingling a huge ring of assorted keys, and straightway began his operations at the door. The work required but a few moments. Presently the bolt was heard to shoot, when the detective instantly thrust the mechanic aside and laid his hand on the knob of the door.

"Remain here in the hall, all of you!" he commanded sharply. "If there is anything amiss in this room, I wish to investigate it before anything is disturbed. I will leave you in suspense only briefly."

He gave the instructions with a display of authority not wisely to have been disregarded, and immediately entered, closing the door behind him.

The chamber was square, with evidently a smaller room adjoining, the door of which was closed.

At a glance his experienced eyes took in the main features of the larger room.

There was but one window, which was closed, with the curtain lowered. There were no lace draperies. The furniture was a new parlor set in purple plush, a cherry center table, and a sideboard to match against the left wall. On this were several decanters and glasses, a cut-glass jar of fancy crackers, part of a Dutch cheese on a china plate, and an open box of cigars.

On the table was a small tray of japanned wood, containing two liquor glasses. One was empty and standing upright. The other had been overturned, and its contents spilled in the tray. The close, stuffy air of the room was heavy with the odor of the liquor.

Quickly approaching the door of the inner chamber, Detective Keene threw it open.

A shocking spectacle instantly met his gaze.

The room was furnished with a bed, one chair, and a chiffonier. It had but one window, which, like that in the adjoining room, was closed, with the curtain drawn nearly to the lower sash.

Upon the unopened bed, stretched diagonally across it, still and cold in death, lay the rigid figure of a young man, still clad as when he had entered. His bloodless hands still held in convulsive clutch the snowy coverlid, his head was thrown back, his distorted face upturned, and his white throat revealed with terrible distinctness the livid marks of the hands and fingers which had throttled the life from out his body.

"Good heavens!" muttered Keene, shocked for the moment. "The landlady was right!"

Of the crime, and its horribly brutal character, there could be no possible doubt.

Before the startled detective could give further consideration of the tragic picture, his quick ear caught the sound of a deep and commanding voice from the direction of the hall.

"Make room here, please! Allow me to pass!"

Detective Keene wheeled about as the outer door was unceremoniously opened, and at once beheld the imposing figure and gravely forceful face of his superior officer, and head and front of the Boston secret service—Chief Inspector Watts.

CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERIOUS TRAGEDY.

Chief Inspector Watts was not surprised at finding Detective Keene on the scene. Through Maginnis and the division superintendent he already had been informed of the fact by wire.

"Good morning, Keene," he at once said brusquely. "What do you find here?"

"A crime of the most brutal character, chief," said Keene.

"Do you mean it?"

"See for yourself."

Inspector Watts surveyed the inner room with outward indifference. Whatever his feelings, he was one who rarely suffered them to show on the surface.

"The man has been strangled," he said presently. "Brutal, indeed. How long have you been in here?"

"Scarce a minute, sir."

"He has been dead some hours. Do these people know him?"

"I know him by reputation, sir," said Keene. "His name is Carroll Banks. He is the youngest son of Perry Banks, the wealthy jeweler."

"Is he married?"

"Not to my knowledge, sir."

"Hasn't he been living with his parents?"

"He has been lodging here for ten days, I am told. He has been a rather popular clubman, and in a sly way was inclined to be fast. I fear, chief, that there is a rather dark side to this affair, and that the truth will not be easily obtained."

"You've been making some inquiries?" said Inspector Watts quickly.

"Yes; while waiting for the locksmith."

"What have you learned?"

In a few words Keene imparted the information gathered from Miss Quincy and the landlady, and the chief led the way to the outer room.

"The case wears a surface aspect," he now said curtly. "Banks brought some young woman here; evidently a willing visitor. These glasses indicate that they had been drinking together."

"Or possibly the girl refused, since one is overturned and its contents spilled."

"You are right. That speaks well for the girl. Their relations seem to have offended some third party, possibly a brother, a betrothed, or a husband, who followed them to this room. An angry interview occurred. The girl departed, or was sent away, frightened. The altercation between the men continued, till personal violence and the murder of Banks resulted. Then the criminal extinguished the gas, secured the windows and door, and stole from the house. That's the surface aspect. We'll see if aught lies beneath."

And Chief Watts raised the curtain, then unfastened and threw open the window. For a moment he gazed down at the red face of the building and the picket fence far below, then abruptly turned back and closed the door of the room in which the body lay.

"Bring those women in!" he commanded. "I'll question them further."

Keene stepped to the hall door and obeyed.

"As you apprehended, Mrs. Stratton," he gravely explained, "your lodger is dead. Please step inside with your companions. The chief inspector wishes to question you."

This confirmation of her fears quickly sent the landlady into a clamor concerning the threatened reputation of her house, but the authoriative voice of the chief as quickly cut her short.

"Silence!" he commanded sternly. "Yours is not the first house to suffer such a tragedy. Listen to me, now, and answer my questions. Just when did Mr. Banks engage these rooms and come here to lodge?"

"One week ago Monday last, sir," moaned Mrs. Stratton, too subdued by her questioner's austerity to give further expression to her feelings.

"Did he give any reasons for coming here?"

"He said that he only desired the rooms for a time, and he paid two weeks in advance."

"Is this his furniture?"

"He furnished this room, sir, but not the bedroom. He thought my set here was not nice enough."

"Did he say why?"

"No, sir."

"Has he been in the habit of receiving visitors?"

"I don't know of his having had any before last night, sir."

"Has he slept here each night?"

"Yes, sir."

"How about days?"

"He went away each morning, and seldom returned before evening."

"Early or late?"

"About ten o'clock, sir, usually."

"He was later last night. Did you see him?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see the lady who came here with him?"

"I did not."

"Or the man who is said to have been here?"

"No, sir."

"Who admitted the latter at your front door?"

"He must have entered without ringing, sir. I always answer the bell in the evening; but no person rang last night. I was about my room, which is off the back parlor, until nearly midnight."

"Do you habitually leave your front door so that one may enter without a key?"

"I do evenings, sir, till I retire for the night, because all of my lodgers are not provided with latchkeys; and I don't find it pleasant to answer the bell too frequently."

"It is a careless way to leave your door!" said Inspector Watts curtly.

"Nothing ill ever happened before, sir!" retorted the landlady, who could readily develop a spirit of her own. "Most of my lodgers are women, sir; and reputable women, as well."

"I didn't imply the contrary. Do you know of any person who saw the strange man enter or leave?"

"No, sir; I do not. He must have come and gone very quickly and quietly, or I should have seen or heard him myself."

"Has Mr. Banks had any mail delivered here?"

"No, sir."

"Anybody been here to inquire after him?"

"No, sir."

"Has he a trunk here?"

"No, sir."

"Humph! Evidently these rooms were taken temporarily, and for some special purpose!" growled the chief, with the frown of one feeling rather baffled. "Which is the woman who saw the girl depart, Mr. Keene?"

"I am, please you, sir!" exclaimed Miss Quincy, tripping forward, with a shake of her ringlets.

"Could you identify the girl?" demanded Inspector Watts, with a searching glance.

"I think I could, sir."

"How was she dressed?"

"In a black suit and jacket, sir, with hat to match."

"Wear a veil?"

"No, sir."

"Did she look like a girl of means, or a poor girl? In a word, was she stylishly clad?"

"Her style did not impress me, yet she was dressed neatly," declared Miss Quincy, who rather enjoyed her prominence, probably because of the novelty. "I noticed chiefly her face, of which I caught a quick glance. She appeared young and pretty."

"Did she see you?"

"She heard me open my door, sir, for she immediately quickened her step and hastened downstairs."

"As if wishing to escape unobserved?"

"Precisely, sir."

"How are these halls lighted at night, landlady?"

"With bracket lamps, sir, which are left burning till daylight."

"That's all, now, madam!" exclaimed the chief; then he turned sharply to the young woman who had gone after the locksmith. "Are you a lodger here, also?"

"Yes, sir," she bowed composedly. "But I occupy a back room on the floor below, and I can add nothing to your present fund of information. I was abed and asleep at nine o'clock."

The chief knit his brows. The testimony was not encouraging. He stood for a moment as if framing another question, then abruptly exclaimed:

"That's all, ladies! Vacate the room, please, all of you! Speak to the officer on the sidewalk, Mr. Keene, and order him up here. There's no use protesting, landlady! You must wait for particulars till I am ready to give them! First of all, this affair must have my official investigation."

And, despite the manifest umbrage of the landlady, whose impatience was scarce to be contained, Chief Inspector Watts again excluded the women from the room and closed the door.

Keene meantime had leaned from the window and called down to the officer. The chief's carriage now stood at the curbing. A small crowd had collected near by, and the news of the crime had leaked out. Two women were crossing the street, with heads bare, and the withdrawal of the officer left the way clear for them to enter the house.

When Keene turned back into the room the chief was

using the sideboard for a desk, and hurriedly writing two addresses upon a leaf torn from his notebook.

"Maginnis," he said sharply, when that officer appeared at the door; "go send the district medical examiner here at once. His address is the upper one on this paper."

"Yes, sir!"

"Then go to the lower—it's the large jewelry house on Tremont Street—and inform the proprietor that a young man said to be his son is dead here. Ask him to come at once and see if he can identify him."

"Yes, sir."

"Also send here the first officer you meet, to take your place at the house door."

Maginnis took the slip of paper tendered, respectfully touched his helmet, then vanished into the hall.

At the same moment the shrill, girlish voice of some person on the stairs was heard, protesting forcibly:

"I guess I know! Do you think I'm blind, Mrs. Stratton? I guess I know what I saw with my own eyes!"

Chief Watts started slightly.

"What have we here?" he muttered, striding to the door.

He was met at the threshold by the two women whom Detective Keene had lately seen crossing the street.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE TWO NIGHTS OF TERROR.

By THEO. D. C. MILLER.

Many years ago I was traveling through the Western States, and stopped for the night in a small but beautiful village, which was sweetly nestled among the fairy groves that gem the winding shores of the sparkling Illinois. I engaged a room at the only inn the place afforded, and found everything pleasant and agreeable; the landlord willing to impart any information desired, his wife an excellent cook, and their three blooming daughters affectionate and charming creatures. The days passed pleasantly away, and I disliked to have the moment approach when I must bid adieu to this bewitching paradise. Nevertheless, the hour was fast approaching, and my preparations were being hurriedly made. Among the many new acquaintances I formed, was an old, gray-haired man, who had long been a "lighthouse keeper" a few miles from off the barren coast of Spain. He was an intelligent man, agreeable and communicative; and many a pleasant hour I passed in the society of that aged father and his lovely daughter. They had come west to dwell among their early friends, and were respected and loved by the people for their honest and virtuous ways.

One evening, after considerable entreaty on my part, the old man consented to give me a few outlines of his solitary ocean life! so the next evening—it being the one chosen for a rehearsal of the many painful events he had witnessed—found me, at a very early hour, within Noah Wilson's mansion. Everything was in readiness; but the old man meekly smoked his pipe and took a glass of wine; then seating himself within his old armchair, he related the following interesting incidents:

"I was appointed by the English government to take charge of the Williston Lighthouse, situated about a hundred leagues from off the coast, and said to be a towering cliff of wild and terrific magnificence. As soon as preparations were made I left my native land, taking with me my young and beautiful wife. We reached our destination in safety, and found it to be more romantic than even our most sanguine expectations dare picture it.

"The rock was steep and towering, completely encircled by the most delightful evergreens; and the lighthouse was a beautiful abode, cheerful and pleasant. The spray of old ocean dashed furiously against the rock; and we learned to love the sweet music—aye! even the wild murmuring of the fierce storm king. The white foaming waves would dash their spray far up the haughty cliff, and the strange piping of the winds made the scene we witnessed one of the wildest magnificence. We would pass the entire day beside the beach, eagerly listening to the angry surges, and beholding God's power in staying the awful tempest.

"Long and pleasant years passed away; a lovely daughter was given us, and our joy knew no bounds. An hour of sadness came. Ella, my wife, was taken suddenly ill, and, although many remedies from our medical store were given her to conquer the alarming symptoms, they availed nothing—she died, and to me it seemed a dark, bitter hour. We laid her to rest beneath the deep blue sea, and many a tear we shed at the parting hour. Our home flower was withered; one cheerful light was extinguished forever.

"Time continued—my blooming Eudora grew more beautiful each day, and there was a quiet loveliness in her nature I could not fathom—a pure, spotless oasis. She loved the lonely life we led, shrank from no danger; and her highest aim was to shield the poor sailors from destruction. The wildest nights found her by my side, eagerly scanning the boisterous sea, for she could not sleep when danger to the suffering mariner stalked abroad. As I beheld her unselfish spirit, I could not help idolizing my darling child, and daily I prayed that God would spare her life, that she might be a blessing to my old age.

"One night—oh, can I never forget that terrible scene!—the storm king burst forth with maddening fury, and as the darkness came on, no eye could penetrate the inky density spread around. The wind mournfully howled, the thunder rolled, and lightning flashed; the waves were fiercely dashed against the beach, and all bespoke a fearful warring of nature's elements. I shuddered, for the surly eve seemed wild and awful as the last day of time!

"'Oh, father, what if some noble vessel should be wrecked upon the beach! I have put a double quantity of oil in the lamps, and they are brightly burning, but the rays, I fear, but feebly penetrate this dense blackness. Great Heaven! what is that?'

"A crashing sound, as of some heavy substance being dashed against the beach, was heard; but before I could speak, Eudora, like a fleet deer, was flying down the dangerous steep. I followed madly after, frantically calling my child, and fearing that she was crushed; but I met her returning, and with a cry of terror, she grasped my hand, exclaiming:

"'Hasten, father, hasten! I hear wailing cries for help, and I fear that we are too late to aid the perishing!'

"With desperate leaps I gained the beach, shoved off my boat, seized the oars, just as Eudora sprang into the boat. With great effort our frail bark stemmed the angry current; but no one could be found, and after an

hour of fruitless search, we returned to the shore. As we touched the beach a portion of the wreck was washed upon shore, and upon it was a lovely female infant, carefully wrapped up in a large cloak. We carried the child to our cottage, and carefully nursed it. She was a pretty, blue-eyed little cherub, and I forthwith adopted her as my daughter.

"The next morning nothing of the wreck could be found. We carefully searched, hoping to obtain some clew; but, alas! to no avail.

"Years passed away. My adopted daughter grew beautiful and good, and I loved her as dearly as I did my own charming Eudora. We called her Lilla, she was so sweet and modest, and possessed such a pleasant disposition. The girls were inseparable companions, and together they sat by the shore, watching the coming and receding tide.

"At length I grew to love Lilla so fondly that I began to fear something would happen to throw light upon her parentage, and perhaps sever our long and happy relation. I could not bear to harbor the thought that we must ever part; for I knew that Eudora's heart would sorrow with the most bitter grief. Oh! the bitterness I then experienced pen cannot describe.

"Lilla's eighteenth anniversary, from the time she was rescued from the wreck, came round, and we had a very merry time. The sweetest delicacies were procured from England, and we tried to enjoy ourselves as much as our lonely situation would permit.

"The day continued pleasant till nearly nightfall, when a fierce and terrible storm set in. Each moment it grew more wild and awful, and seemed to be a continuation of the horrid scene we had witnessed just eighteen years before. The lurid flashes of lightning pierced the inky darkness, and the muttering thunder shook the towering rock on which we dwelt.

"We lit the lamps, kindled a huge bonfire, and took our station at the beach—the girls refusing to permit me to watch alone. For hours we painfully scanned the white-capped billows; then a deafening crash was heard, followed by painful and heart-rending shrieks.

"'Quick, father! to the rescue!' and with the speed of an eagle the girls sprang into the boat.

"I seized the oars, and with terrible velocity our bark pressed over the threatening waves.

"'Help! help! I am perishing!' came in wailing tones over the deep.

"We increased our speed, and just as he was sinking for the last time beneath the angry waves, rescued a manly form from the death angel's embrace.

"We carried him on shore; the sole survivor of the terrible wreck. After careful nursing he recovered his strength, and we found him to be a very intelligent man. He seemed to take great delight in Lilla's society, often gazing upon her with much interest. Then a cloud would darken his noble brow, and burning tears would freely flow.

"At length, by an accident, he heard of Lilla's marvelous preservation from the wreck, and, with an anxious mien, he requested me to relate the incidents. I assented; and as I proceeded with the tale he seemed to suffer the gratest agitation. As I concluded he sprang to his feet, and, embracing the lovely girl, exclaimed:

"'Oh, this is indeed happiness! Look up, sweet one, for I am your father, and you are my long mourned Violet!'

"With a cry of joy she fell weeping into his arms, and their happiness no tongue may tell. Then he told me how his wife and infant daughter had been passengers on the wrecked vessel, and for many years he had mourned them as lost. But his joy upon finding the beautiful Violet had filled his heart with a father's love.

"A few days passed, and, after a tearful parting, he bore my precious child by adoption to England, to bask in fortune's light, and I, sad and lonely, gave my place to a youthful relative, and journeyed to the Western wilds. Here, with my beloved Eudora, I hope to pass the remainder of my days in peace and happiness."

Amid tears the old man concluded his narrative, and, bidding him a lasting farewell, I continued my journey.

SUCH A GOOD BOY.

"Yes, our little four-year-old is such a comfort and such a help to me," said Mrs. Westside to a lady caller. "Why, he can take care of his baby sister as well as any nurse. He is in the next room now playing with little Dorothy." (Raises her voice) "Wal-ter!"

"Yeth, mamma."

"Are you taking care of little sister?"

"Yeth, mamma."

"What are you doing, Walter?"

"Oh, I'se des playin' I'se a barber, and I'se shavin' her wif papa's razor." (Excited tableau.)

STAKED ALL.

"Some years ago," said the gambler, as he lay back puffing his cigar, "I was in California, and while there I frequented a very fast gaming saloon. There came to that place every night a young man. We all liked him, because he seemed rather innocent, and many of us advised him to stay away, but he only smiled, and said he would some day.

"One night he came, looking rather pale, for lately he had lost very heavily. He sat down and commenced to play in an excited manner; but game after game he lost. Then I saw him turn pale, and take a package from his pocket and stake that—it belonged to his firm—and he lost it. After that he passed in his watch, and received the cash, staked that, and lost. Two of his rings followed, and were lost.

"We all felt sorry for him, and heartily wished he would win. At last, all he had left was a thin gold ring, not worth much. He looked at it, and the expression that came over his face was one that I shall never forget. He passed in the ring, and although it was only worth about a dollar, the cashier advanced him fifty dollars. He played, and the bank put up all his money, the firm's money, his watch, and rings against his fifty dollars, and he won.

"Then, when success had come, he laid his head on his arm. We waited five minutes for him to get up, but he did not, and then we lifted his head and saw that he was dead.

"We found out afterward that the ring which changed his luck was his dead mother's wedding ring. I often tried to think what agonies he must have suffered; what recollections must have passed before his mind as he staked that ring."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS

$25,000 Fails to Lure Frank Gotch.

Wrestling promoters in New York have been trying for some time to bring Frank Gotch, the heavyweight wrestling champion of the world, to New York for three bouts with foreign mat stars. He was offered $25,000. Gotch refused the offer, and says he will never wrestle again.

From his Iowa farm Gotch, in replying to the New York offer, wrote that he "positively" had given up wrestling forever. His wife and he had gone over the situation, he wrote, and nothing "will induce me to change my mind."

The call of the foreigners and the offer of big New York purses, he said, will never make him leave his farm again. He suggested that Beall and Americus get together and let the winner defend the title, saying that he was willing to waive his rights in favor of the better of the two.

A Hen With Four Legs.

Mrs. Charles Bennett, of San Antonio, has a perfect specimen of Rhode Island Red hen except that she has two too many legs. The chick was the eleventh egg of a setting of thirteen, and cast its shell off, peeping as lustily as the rest of the brood.

Being something of a monstrosity, as chickens go, the good mother early took a dislike to her strange chick and before many weeks passed "Bobo"—for that is the hen's name—was left to scratch for herself. She became independent and deserted her brothers and sisters, roosting and living by herself.

When she reached the age of "henhood" she became a fighter, and she now whips everything in sight.

Both extra legs are well developed, but the hen has no control over them. They apparently are rigid fixtures. However, as a layer she has a good average and for this reason is being kept by Mrs. Bennett.

Nonpoisonous Matches.

Both the manufacture and sale of matches containing white phosphorus will be brought to an end in this country on July 1, 1915, when the law recently passed by Congress, imposing a prohibitive tax on matches in which this substance is used, will go into full effect. This law was passed after years of agitation and after a long educational campaign that made the public aware of the terrible effects produced on the operatives in match factories through working with white phosphorus, and brought out the fact that there were other forms of phosphorus not of a poisonous nature. Phosphorus is obtained from bones, which consist mainly of phosphorus and lime chemically combined with each other and with organic matter. The two forms most commonly seen are white phosphorus and red phosphorus. The white phosphorus is poisonous, while the red phosphorus is practically harmless.

Under the new law only two kinds of matches will be in use—the so-called "safety" match, which ignites when scratched on a specially prepared surface on the side of the box, and the "bird's-eye" match, which can be ignited on any dry surface after the manner of the white phosphorus match. The main ingredient of the "safety" match is chlorate of potash, while the surface on which it is to be lighted is painted with red phosphorus. The substance used for the tip of the "bird's-eye" match is sesquisulphide of phosphorus, a compound of a comparatively harmless nature. In making these matches, the first dip coats the end of the match with an inert substance which keeps the match burning after it is lighted, while the second dip places on the end of this substance the sesquisulphide tip. A temperature of over 300 degrees Fahrenheit is required for igniting these matches. They cannot be ignited through being stepped on, they do not spark or fly, and are not explosive.

Leach Pleases Murphy.

According to President Charles Webb Murphy, of the Cubs, Tommy Leach, regular center fielder of the West Side aggregation, has submitted his terms for the season of 1914, and they were recorded officially at Cub headquarters, attended to by the Cub president after his return from Cincinnati, and Manager John Evers, where the two attended the meeting of the National commission in the town made famous by Garry Herrmann.

Murphy was so elated over the fact that Leach had wired in his terms for the coming season that he allowed the name of the Cub gardener to appear at the opening of his letter, adding that Leach's terms were satisfactory, and then proceeded to say a few endearing words about the man who kept the Cubs in the running last season. "Leach does not dissipate," said Murphy, "and he is still fast on his feet and has several more years of major-league baseball concealed about his person."

Ad Wolgast is Too Rough.

For hitting in clinches and indulging in roughing tactics not permitted under the laws, Ad Wolgast was reprimanded by the Wisconsin boxing commission for committing these irregularities in the recent contest in Milwaukee with Joe Rivers, of California. Wolgast was told that a repetition of the violations employed in the Rivers bout would result in more severe action being taken by the commission.

Beech-wood Shoes are Worn by Many.

Few trees in the United States have a wider commercial range than the beech, and its uses are increasing all the time. In this country beech is the favorite material for wooden shoes, the manufacture of which has reached considerable proportions, according to the department of agriculture. Shoes made of beech, the department says, cost from 60 to 75 cents a pair and are good for two years. They are worn by those who have to work in cold or wet places, such as tanneries, breweries, and livery stables, and by workmen in steel mills and glass factories who must walk on hot grates or floors. A large number of farmers are using shoes made of beech. One feature of the beech that makes it valuable is the fact that it does not absorb water like other woods.

The department of agriculture's bulletin on the use of beech is interesting because it shows that the wood is put to a much wider range of uses than the average person

would be likely to suspect. Beech enters into hundreds of articles from hobby-horse rockers to butchers' blocks. We walk on beech floors, eat off beech picnic plates, carry beech baskets, play with beech toys, sit on beech chairs, and in dozens of other ways use articles made of beech almost every day of our lives. Its freedom from taste fits the wood especially for articles which come in contact with foodstuffs, and beech meat boards, skewers, lard tubs, butter boxes, sugar hogsheads, refrigerators, dishes, spoons, and scoops are widely used.

Live Baby by Parcel Post.

Mrs. E. H. Staley, of Wellington, Kan., received her two-year-old nephew by parcel post recently from his grandmother, in Stratford, Okla., where he had been left for a visit.

The boy wore a tag about his neck showing it had cost 18 cents to send him through the mails. He was transported 25 miles by rural route before reaching the railroad. He rode with the mail clerks, shared his lunch with them, and arrived in good condition.

Dog Understands English.

H. S. Gatchell, of Providence, R. I., owns a collie dog that can understand English, according to her owner. "Lady," as the pet is called, can pick up a coin of the denomination asked, will walk up the steps of any house along the street she is requested to, or will climb into any automobile designated. The dog will do most anything she is told. She is 4 years old, and her mistress has refused $500 for her.

Coyote Pet is a Curiosity.

A coyote, 8 months old, which is the pet of Miss Irma Waumbach, of Altoona, Pa., is quite a curiosity in this part of the country. The animal was lassoed on the ranch of the girl's uncle, near Alliance, Neb., several months ago. It is a very gentle pet.

Is Proud of Oldest Buggy.

A. F. Graeter, of Dillon, Mont., is the owner of a buggy which is the oldest in the State. It is past 51 years old, and has been in almost continual service since it was brought to Montana in 1862. It was made to order and cost $500 delivered in Bannack, Mont. It has seen hard service, but is in good condition yet. Graeter, who is proud of his relic, will celebrate his eightieth anniversary next July.

Cabbage Grows Under Snow.

While H. A. Stewart, of Ione, Wash., was walking in the snow, which covered a garden he had abandoned last October, he stepped on a cabbage head and on investigation, found several other full-grown heads of the vegetable, well matured and bleached perfectly. This year the snow fell before the ground was frozen, and in the warmth of the blanket of snow the cabbages grew.

Lost in Sight of Port.

Captain Lorenz, the first officer, and seventeen of the crew of the German bark *Hera*, from Pisagua, Chile, for Falmouth, England, lost their lives recently through the vessel striking a rock as she had almost finished her voyage. The remaining five men were saved through the gallantry of the first officer, who, realizing that his own end was near, handed his whistle to a comrade, with orders to blow it.

This attracted the attention of the crew of a lifeboat, who rescued the men from the rigging.

The *Hera* encountered a gale at the entrance to the English Channel. She lost her course and struck on the rocks near Porthalla Bight. The vessel immediately filled, and the men took to the boats, which capsized. Eight succeeded in getting back to the ship, but three of them were washed off before the lifeboat arrived. The first officer, who was lashed to the rigging, blew his whistle until the rising tide had almost engulfed him. Then he passed it over with the remark: "Here, chum, you can do better with that than I can," and fell back dead.

Sunday-school Dog is Buried.

Fido, the most faithful attendant at St. Peter's Episcopal Sunday school, at Ashtabula, Ohio, has been buried in the front lawn of his home. Fido was a little black dog of obscure ancestry, owned by Ward Cross, 12-year-old son of Doctor W. S. Cross. For ten years he had attended the Sunday school regularly and always brought his penny. He would enter the church with solemn air, trot down the aisle to the infant seats and remain throughout the service without a bark or whine.

Drill for Water; Find Gold.

While men were sinking a well for artesian water on the ranch of George Brownfield, near Eathen, Wyo., and at about 100 feet down, the drill struck gold-bearing quartz. Gold as large as grains of wheat and in strings the size of a match was found in the quartz brought up by the drill. The ore is estimated to assay $33,000 to the ton. There is much excitement in the vicinity over the find and a shaft is being sunk and claims staked out.

Seven Sad Sailors Deny Romantic Story.

Several weeks ago a number of newspapers published a long story concerning seven sailors cast away on Easter Island, in the South Seas. The story was that the sailors had taken native belles as their wives. It was stated that Captain Benson, master of the abandoned schooner *Eldorado*, had left the seven on the island because the delights of life there had weaned them from all desire for civilization. But the romantic yarn is shot to pieces by the sailors themselves. They were picked up by a British steamer that happened to visit the island and have arrived at San Francisco. With one voice the seven proclaim that nothing could have persuaded them to marry any Easter Islander, for all the women are ugly and dirty. They remained on the island five months because they believed they were sure to be picked up by a passing vessel and did not wish to risk their lives in one of the *Eldorado's* small boats.

Organizes Relay Team of Civil War Veterans.

Freeman A. Pierce, of Detroit, Mich., has announced that he will organize a relay team of ten Civil War veterans to race Colonel J. L. Smith, of Highland Park, Mich., during the National G. A. R. encampment next summer. Smith, who defeated three relay teams at the Los Angeles encampment last year, is willing to race again this year.

So far the challenge of "Old Soldier" Barnes, of Pittsburgh, Pa., who offered to race 100 miles in twenty-four

hours against a team of ten men, including Colonel Smith, has received no answers. Barnes' challenge received wide publicity through *The Saturday Blade*, but the veterans fear a 100-mile race might prove too strenuous for them, or that it might end in Barnes' breakdown through overexertion, casting a cloud over the encampment.

Fitzsimmons Wins One Bout.

While the New York State supreme court was upholding the boxing commission's ruling that Robert Fitzsimmons was too old to engage in contests in New York, the former heavyweight champion was engaged in a practice bout at Dunellen, N. J., and was knocked out by his son, Bob, junior, who is being groomed to enter the "white-hope" class. However, the elder Fitzsimmons was not badly hurt, and in his battle at Williamsport, Pa., with Dan Sweeney, of Cleveland, was an easy winner. Sweeney was knocked down eleven times.

Cape Cod Canal Nearly Cut.

The Cape Cod Canal is likely to be open for small craft within six months. This six-mile ditch connecting Cape Cod Bay with Buzzards Bay is 75 per cent completed, according to the engineers, and it is believed that the waters of the two bays will meet the coming summer.

When first opened the canal will not be sufficiently deep to admit coastwise vessels, but power boats and other small craft will be allowed to go through. Already several New England yacht clubs are planning cruises with the canal passage in view.

Two big dredges that entered the canal, one at each end, are now within 8,000 feet of each other at Bournedale. Between them, for nearly a mile, is a fifteen-foot trench which will be flooded when the dredges cut the barriers.

Big Fighter Enters Paperweight Class to Marry.

When Edward Smith, known to the pugilistic world as "Gunboat" Smith, was married in Chicago recently, he entered the paperweight class, for his pretty wife weighs only 100 pounds, while the champion white heavyweight, as he is called, tips the beam at 190 pounds when in condition to enter the prize ring.

Smith is on the vaudeville stage at present, but, like most boxers, is declared to be a much better fighter than an actor.

He has been matched to box Jess Willard in San Francisco, Cal., July 4. Tom Jones, manager of Willard, guaranteed Smith $8,000 for his end of the purse, in order to give Willard another chance at the champion. Smith defeated Willard a few months ago.

Puts His Head in the Hippo's Mouth.

Jim Crowley, the young keeper of the only performing hippotamus in the world, at Central Park Zoo, in New York, says there is no danger at all in sticking his head and shoulders into the cavernous mouth of the huge "river horse." However, Jim is the only person who has the nerve to do it.

Central Park's hippo has been trained to do a number of stunts, such as waltzing, playing, and pretending to be dead. Of course it is not a graceful waltzer, as it is more than twelve feet long, stands four feet high at the shoulder and weighs about four tons. The enormous mouth is equipped with numerous ivory-capped grinders, with powerful rooting and biting teeth near the front. Despite the fact that it is nearly all mouth and stomach, the hippo is by no means stupid. Veteran hunters in tropical Africa, where the big creatures are found, say that a wounded or enraged hippo is one of the most dangerous beasts. Jim Crowley's pet is usually docile, but it is subject to fits of rage, and if it ever has one of these fits while Crowley is looking in, the young keeper will lose his head. One snap of the jaws would do it. At first Crowley propped the jaws open with a heavy stick.

Ghost of a Goat Disrupts Church.

The congregation, of the Methodist Church, Geneva, Iowa, is demoralized and a part of the membership has boycotted the services, because of the ghost of a goat which has been seen almost every night, going through gyrations and antics on the roof of the church. The pastor will not believe his church is haunted by the spirit of a goat despite the fact that numbers of his congregation say they have seen it and some are said to have even gone so far as to shoot at it without apparent effect.

Goes Five Hundred Miles Weekly to Preach.

The Reverend Peter Crockett, of Pendleton, Ore., a senior at the University of Oregon, makes a journey of 500 miles each week, to preach at a little church at Wasco.

Preparations for Rowing Season Begun.

From now until late in June the struggle for seats in the racing shell and the daily training grind will continue without intermission. Coaches are overhauling rowing machines, rigging barges, and generally preparing for the racing season, which, it is predicted, will be the greatest college rowing year in the history of the sport.

Eight universities or colleges in the East, one in the Middle West, and three on the Pacific coast have already planned their rowing campaigns, which include a larger number of dual, triangular, and intercollegiate title regattas than ever before recorded in this country. Abroad, Oxford and Cambridge are near the halfway mark in their training for their annual race, and their progress is being closely watched by two of the Eastern universities in view of a possible international intervarsity regatta before midsummer.

The Eastern college rowing situation, considered as a whole, is one of the most promising in recent seasons. Aside from Columbia and Syracuse, there are large and veteran squads available at every institution which advocates rowing. In almost every case more than 50 per cent of the oarsmen who won their varsity letters in 1913 regattas are trying for places in the eights again and are supplemented by excellent material from last year's freshmen combinations. The recent ruling of the intercollegiate stewards providing for a race for second eights in place of the fours on the Hudson will also provide extra places for the aspiring sweep swingers. Under this ruling it will be necessary for those colleges which desire to compete in all three events on the Hudson to develop and seat twenty-four oarsmen in the shells for the varsity, second, and freshmen races.

The open winter has proved a help in the fall practice, and several of the coaches report that their charges were able to establish new records for late autumn rowing dur-

'ing 1913. Coach Courtney had six eights in the water on December 6, and has planned to send his crews out at every favorable opportunity during the entire winter. At Syracuse, Coach Ten Eyck, who has just signed a five-year contract, is also planning for an early season start. If the board of stewards of the I. R. A. will permit the students of the forestry department to row for the Orange, Ten Eyck's worries will be eliminated.

A stiffer proposition faces Jim Rice at Columbia, for the New York university squad appears to grow smaller each year, and Rice finds it difficult to secure even a fair number of students physically suited for the hard four-mile race on the Hudson.

The situation at Pennsylvania and Yale is much alike, in that both colleges are working with new coaches.

At New Haven a trio composed of Richard Armstrong, captain of the '95 crew; Guy Nicholls, of England, and C. F. Giannini, recent New York Athletic Club coach, will direct the work of the Eli crewmen. At Philadelphia Vivian Nicholls, a brother of Guy, has replaced Ellis Ward, and the work of these famous English oarsmen, who expect to develop a stroke combining the best points of both the English and American systems will be watched with interest. At Harvard, Princeton, and the United States Naval Academy there is no change in the established order of coaching, and reports from all three institutions are optimistic.

Dream Forecasts His Death.

John B. Fullerton, a fireman on the M., K. & T. Railway, dreamed that he was being crushed to death beneath his engine. He told his friends about the dream just before he started on his run.

Two hours later he was crushed to death when he fell beneath the wheels of the engine and tender at Broken Arrow, Okla.

Luxuries for Honor Men.

Ohio's "make-men" policy, now governing what was formerly the most notorious State penitentiary in the country, will advance another step in a few days, when Warden P. E. Thomas will open his "hotel" for "perfect-record" prisoners. One hundred and twenty yeggs, burglars, porch climbers, pickpockets, "bad men," embezzlers, and plain thieves with "clean records" will be removed from their cells to a roomy, well-ventilated dormitory.

Every one of them will sleep at night in a comfortable iron bed of the hospital type; will have a locker, a bag, roomy rocking-chair, a plain oak stand, and an electric drop light. A prison bar won't be in sight. After the day's work is done and the prisoner disrobes for the night he will neatly crease his gray regulation trousers, hang his coat on a hanger, and place the apparel in a steel locker built for the purpose. On an upper shelf he will find his clean clothing, and in a lower compartment he may deposit his shoes and draw forth a pair of bedroom slippers, seat himself in a big rocking-chair, light his pipe, and under the rays of his adjustable electric lamp read the latest papers and books.

Workmen Unearth an Ancient Well.

An ancient well, which experts declare has been buried for centuries was unearthed on Beacon Hill on the site of the new Boston City Club home. Workmen of the excavating force came upon the odd find fully thirty-five feet below the street level.

The well is a perfect circle, completely incased in rough-hewn, old-fashioned, four-inch black oak planks, which have remained in an almost perfect state of preservation. The workmen already have penetrated sixty-five feet into its depths and have not reached the bottom.

The workmen have pulled out of the well's center more than sixty feet of wooden pipe, also of black oak and still fairly solid, for it is almost petrified.

A rough stone arch covered the well, which was four feet in diameter. The contractor is quite anxious to ascertain the depths of the well. It means money to him as it will be necessary to fill it with concrete in order to insure a firm foundation for the club building which is to be constructed.

City Shocks Rats to Death by Trap.

A new kind of trap is being used by Tacoma, Wash., in an effort to exterminate the thousands of little animals that infest the city wharves. William Hall, dock superintendent, and Harry T. Abbott, city electrician, are the inventors of the trap, which they have refused to have patented because they think other cities should be given free opportunity to use it. The trap consists of a metal plate about ten inches in diameter, to which are attached two-inch uprights for holding the bait. To get at the bait the rat rises on its hind feet and places its fore paws on the plate. This tips the plate, the tipping turns on the electricity and the rat is shocked to death.

The trap is placed below the floor, on the wooden girders which are the favorite hunting grounds of the rats. In a room above the stairs a light burns when the trap is set. When Mr. Rat himself makes the connection which turns on the electricity which shocks him to death there is a little click in this upper room which shows that the deed has been done. It is not possible for the rat to get away with the bait or even to touch it without putting its paws on the plate, and its death is absolutely sure to follow its attempt to possess itself of the odorous rat dainties that are placed on the metal spikes.

It is of the greatest importance that the rats around the docks should be exterminated, because of their disease-carrying powers. One object of the city officials of Tacoma in the installation of the new traps is to stop up one more avenue whereby bubonic plague may enter the port.

Knocks Eight Hundred Men Out of Jobs.

Eight hundred employees of logging camps were thrown out of employment when the bridge over the Kentucky River at Quicksand, Ky., was pulled entirely off its pier. A hook on the log that was being moved over the bridge on a rolling machine caught and the machinery could not be stopped until the bridge and log had both dropped into the river.

Cardiff Giant Goes Home.

The Cardiff Giant, one of the greatest fakes of the nineteenth century, has returned to its birthplace for the first time since it left Fort Dodge, Iowa, in 1868 as a rough block of gypsum rock. The piece of stone procured its name from Cardiff, N. Y., where it was unearthed by "Stub" Newell, a farmer, and was declared to be a petrified man of ancient days. The giant was found while

neighbors were helping Newell dig a well. It was taken throughout the country and shown at 10 cents and 25 cents per spectactor, but was exposed as a joke early in the '80's. It developed that M. B. Martin, a partner of Newell, purchased a huge block of gypsum rock at Fort Dodge, shipped it to Chicago, where it was chiseled into form by an Italian sculptor; sent it to Syracuse, N. Y., as "dressed marble," and then carted it to the Newell Farm, where it was buried. J. R. Muhoney, of Fort Dodge, paid $10,000 for the stone giant, weighing 2,990 pounds.

Boys Unmask Coin Plant.

Clews given to the police by newsboys resulted in the seizure of a counterfeit plant in the West End, Boston, Mass., and the arrest of eleven men. There has been 6,000 bad half dollars circulated in that city and its vicinity. More than 1,000 of them were passed on Lynn Street cars.

Much of the spurious coin found its way into the pockets of newsboys. This put the boys on the alert, and when two of them saw a man passing some of the counterfeits, they followed him, and then told their story to a policeman. The raid followed.

Railroad Tie Becomes Part of an Elm Tree.

Hunters who frequent the John Schray woods, five miles northwest of Lansing, Mich., have often noticed a railroad tie growing into an elm tree, and have marveled at the freak, and wondered how it became in the tree. Recently it developed that it was placed in the crotch thirty-five years ago by Henry Neller, who, when a youth in a test of strength with other young farmers, chucked the tie in a crotch of the elm, which was then a sapling.

The elm is now twenty inches through, and so tightly has its bark grown over the tie, that it could not be removed.

Imprisoned in Mint Vault.

Imprisoned for three hours in a steel airtight vault in the United States mint, at Philadelphia, William Taylor, an employee, was released in an exhausted condition. Taylor was in the vault when the door was accidentally closed, the time lock preventing its being opened. A hole was drilled through the vault, through which air was forced, together with a slip of paper containing the combination. Taylor worked on the lock and succeeded in releasing himself.

How Tener Was Batted from Box to First Game.

The well-wishers of Governor Tener are hoping that his début into National League politics will be more successful than his début as a National League pitcher. Captain Anson saw Tener pitch in a semiprofessional game in 1887 and was so impressed with the youngster's ability that he offered him a contract.

Prior to that Tener had tried his hand at first base for Pittsburgh. His début as a pitcher took place in August, 1887, Indianapolis being the opponent of Chicago. Tener took one of the most artistic lacings that he ever had to withstand in his entire career. No matter what he offered the Indianapolis batsmen they propelled them right back at him.

He tried curves, speed, and a slow one, but they hit everything he sent over. When the hostilities were over Indianapolis was found to be ahead, 14 to 0. This début might have taken the heart out of the average kid, but not so with Tener. Anson also retained his confidence in the youngster and sent him into the box a few days later.

This time Tener won in an impressive manner, and he won four straight before he was stopped again. Despite that awful lambasting at the start Tener finished the 1888 season with seven victories and five defeats.

It is interesting to note that in 1890 Governor Tener was secretary of the Players' Brotherhood League, the unfortunate circuit which waged a futile war against the National League. Now, when the players are again organizing, Governor Tener has been called to the office of president of the National League, which league Tener fought to the last ditch twenty-three years ago.

In fact, it was the failure of the Brotherhood League to succeed which prompted Tener to retire from baseball and to devote his time to business and politics.

Lead Antelope into Station.

According to Billy Whalem, conductor on the little railway line which connects the Wet Mountain Valley with Texas Creek, Col., antelope, deer, and other animals, which had been snowbound for days, followed in the wake of the first train to make the trip after a big snowstorm. They became so tame that they would eat alfalfa hay from the hands of the train crew. They were fed sparingly and were coaxed along until a herd of more than 200 was led into the station at Texas Creek.

Man Refuses to Drink Water.

Enoch Tremont, a stonemason, of Big Laurel, Va., has not taken a drink of water for eighteen years or thereabouts, for it was on the election day on which McKinley defeated Bryan for president the first time that he took his last glass of "Adam's ale." At that time he said: "When I take my next drink of water Bryan will be president-elect. Since then he has kept his vow. When Wilson was elected his friends urged him to take a drink, but he refused, saying he would have to wait only four more years. He drinks milk and lemonade.

World's Largest Gun Will Defend Canal.

The Panama Canal will be defended on the Pacific side by the largest gun in the world. The new weapon has a 16-inch bore. It is now at the Sandy Hook proving grounds, awaiting transportation to the canal."

The cannon will be mounted on a modern disappearing carriage on one of the small islands off the Pacific entrance to the waterway.

Barn Owl is Valuable.

Despite the fact that the barn owl is a much maligned bird, it is a very valuable member of natural society. At least, that is the official verdict of the department of agriculture.

Evidence to support its claim as to the value of the barn owl is shown by the fact that experts of the department have recently discovered that it is a deadly enemy of the pocket gopher pests. Hence, the government is now trying to educate ranchmen, who shoot the barn owl on sight, as to its value in destroying pocket gophers.

Gophers destroy orchards and garden produce and ranchmen in California and other States have attributed destruction of trees to blight. Some of the trees are valued at $100 apiece. A biological-survey expert has reported to Wash-

ington that he saw a gopher burrow under one of these trees and he caught the culprit. "We have found a half a bushel of the remains of gophers near the nest of a barn owl," he reported, "and still almost every ranchman will shoot an owl on sight."

Wooden Ship Lives Long.

The whaling bark *Charles W. Morgan*, of New Bedford, is said to be the oldest whaling vessel in the world. Built in 1841, she has hunted whales for seventy-two years, and is still seaworthy. On her latest voyage she took 3,000 barrels of sperm oil and obtained fifteen pounds of that coveted trophy, ambergris, which is the whaleman's greatest prize.

Rush of Airmen for Over-ocean Flight.

The Aëro Clubs of America and Great Britain have under consideration the proposition to organize an aëroplane race from Newfoundland to Ireland as a result of Rodman Wanamaker's announced plan to coöperate with Glenn H. Curtiss to build a machine for transatlantic flight. The fact that others are building or planning to build water flying machines with which they hope to capture the Lord Northcliffe prize of $50,000 has made this plan necessary for the safety and success of the aviators who will try the over-ocean flight.

Since the announcement of Mr. Wanamaker's intention at least six other serious efforts have been reported. Financial backing has been found here for the building of three large water flying machines.

In France, it has been announced three more are under construction. It is the belief of airmen here that plans for still others are being worked out, but that the men back of these enterprises are keeping their intentions secret for the present.

The intention of the three French aviators, Roland Garros, Marc Poupre, and Brindejonc des Moulinais, to build machines for a flight across the Atlantic was announced in a letter to the Aëro Club from Garros. The text of this letter has not yet been made public. It will probably be given out very shortly. In the meantime Rodman Wanamaker has the plan proposed in it under consideration.

The letter has been read over to Mr. Wanamaker. The Aëro Club of America is now waiting for his suggestions as to the organization of the race itself.

Experienced airmen favor an organized race. They think that government coöperation for a number of scattered attempts could scarcely be expected. Many persons are willing to finance such attempts, but the advantages of a race have been shown to be great. The principal one, according to the belief of the members of the Aëro Club of America, is the elimination of the chance that some contestants in order to beat others to the prize would start without first making every reasonable test for their safety. A sanctioned event would secure this and make for the success of the flight.

Glenn H. Curtiss, who has designed the flying boat for the Rodman Wanamaker flight, has been asked to coöperate in four other attempts to cross the Atlantic. It is said by one of his representatives, however, that there is no likelihood that he will consider designing another machine to complete with the one he has planned for Mr. Wanamaker. Nevertheless he has accepted a commission to build motors of 400 horse power for a huge multiplane now being constructed here by an attorney named Umartin and a Captain Flint, who intend to enter the contest for the Lord Northcliffe prize.

Curtiss has been asked to build a flying boat for the race for L. A. Vilas, the young Chicago sportsman, who made a number of flights here in a flying boat last spring. He was the first man to fly across one of the Great Lakes. He took Nathan Straus and the late S. Osgood Pell for a trip over Long Island Sound at the time he was making flights in this vicinity.

The Aëro Club of America expects Curtiss to arrive from France shortly to push forward the work on the Wanamaker transatlantic flyer, which was begun six months ago at Hammondsport, N. Y. The club gave out recently the first sketch of this great flying ship. It shows a mahogany hull, entirely inclosed, about 35 feet in length. The motor is 200 horse power, and is located in the bow. It drives a large tractor screw, capable of sending the craft through the air at the rate of sixty-five miles an hour.

The wings are attached behind the motor and have a spread of eighty feet and a depth of nearly ten feet. Back of the wings is the inclosed cabin, about twelve feet long. This is arranged for two pilots and fitted with the most modern instruments for indicating the position of the machine in the air, its flying speed, motor speed, direction of flight, and other necessary calculations for the guidance of the operators. All the controls will be in duplicate so that either or both the aviators can handle the machine.

One of the pilots of the flying machine, Lieutenant John C. Porte, of the Royal Navy Flying Corps, is expected to arrive here very soon. He will coöperate with Mr. Wanamaker and Mr. Curtiss in completing the details of the flight from St. John's, Newfoundland, where the 1,600-mile race to the Irish coast will begin.

The prospect of a keenly contested race over the Atlantic, with famous flyers from three countries competing has aroused great interest among airmen on both continents. The European aviators who have written their intention of flying for the Lord Northcliffe prize are experienced over-water aviators, while the Americans who will enter the race have confined most of their efforts to overland flying.

Colonel Mortimer Delana, of the Volunteer Aëro Squadron, recently organized, and secretary of the Aëro Club of America, said that he had received a letter from the managers of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, confirming the increase in the prize offered for a round-the-world flight in an aëroplane from $300,000 to $1,000,000. He said the Aëro Club was responsible for the addition of forty days to the time limit of ninety days for the globe-circling trip.

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